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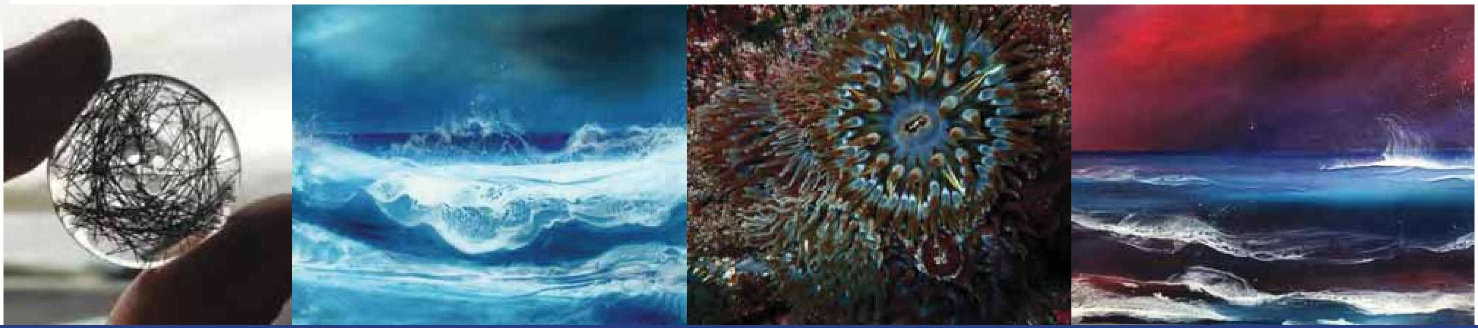

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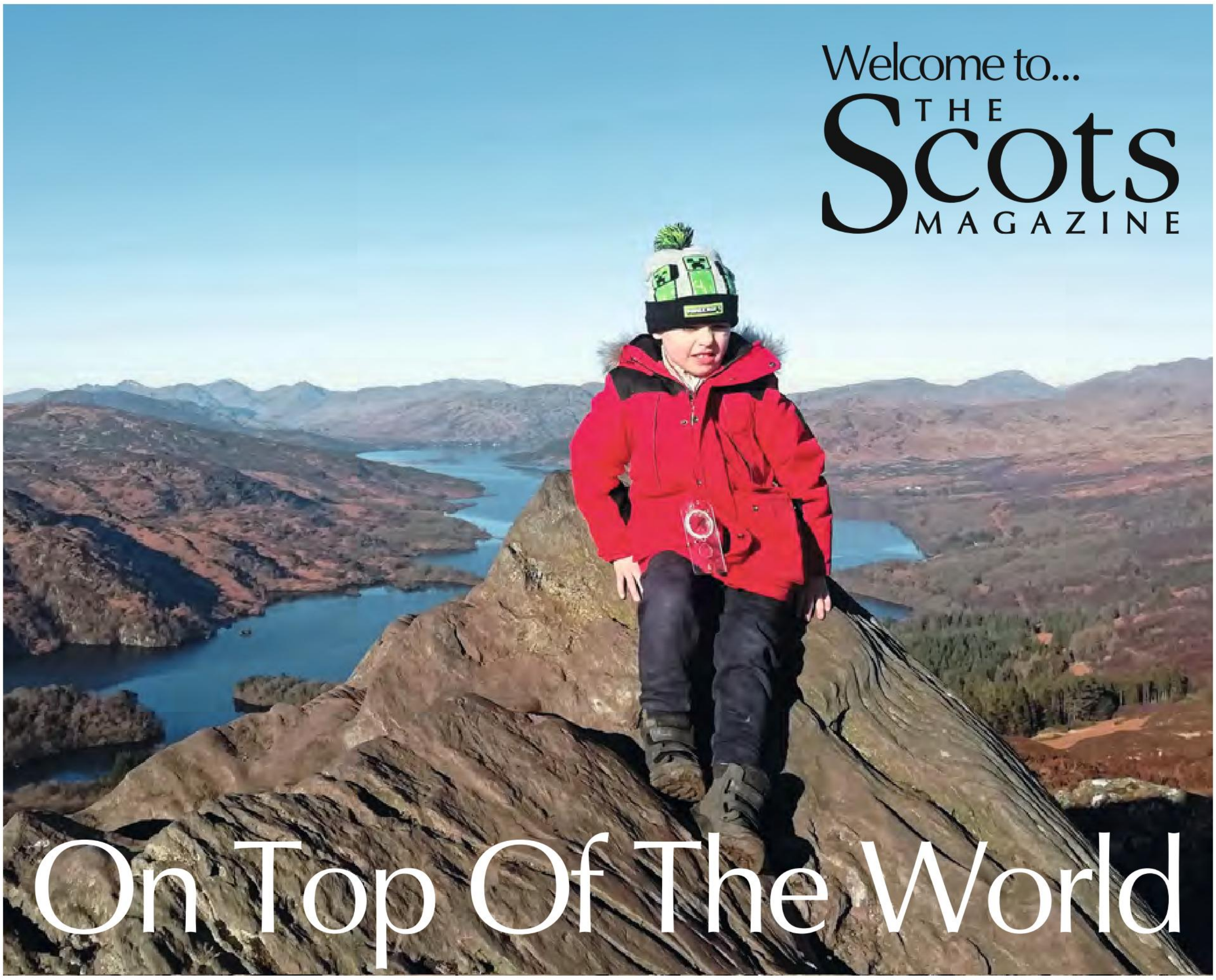
THE Scots MAGAZINE



On Top Of The World

ADVENTURES come in all shapes and sizes – anything that takes you out of your comfort zone and has a bit of uncertainty about its outcome can be called an "adventure".

The picture above is of my six-year-old nephew Archie on the jaggy wee summit of Ben A'an. It's a hill in the Trossachs – at 461 metres (1512 feet) it's half a Munro – and it commands stunning views over Loch Katrine.

Ben A'an is about a 10-minute drive from my house and I've climbed it hundreds of times over the years – I use it as a training hill. But this was Archie's first ever ascent.

To make it even more adventurous, we drove up the night before in my campervan, spending the night in the car park ready for an early start.

After about eight games of snakes and ladders – I lost each one – it was time to turn in. It was a chilly night and I couldn't help thinking of my actual bed, which was pretty much within walking distance.

Archie found the whole experience hugely exciting, of course – especially taking a last peek at the clear night sky.

He'd never seen so many stars and we could easily trace the path of the Milky Way. Not the chocolate bar – that takes a bit of explaining to a young mind...

We set off up the steep wee mountain at first light. It was warm at the summit, and we had a second breakfast with some hot squash made on my stove.

Archie didn't want to leave – he was amazed by the view and insisted this was "the best walk ever". Seeing the wee hill in a new light – through his eyes – I'm inclined to agree.

Whatever your idea of adventure, you'll find loads of inspiration in this May issue of your favourite magazine.

We've a fantastic interview with traveller, TV presenter and author Simon Reeve, as well as ideas for days out in the hills and fun family trips.

And we've a wonderful chat with an amazing man called David Cunningham. At 90 years old, he's back at uni studying for his fourth degree in 11 years. Now that's an adventure!

ROBERT WIGHT, Editor
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MAY 2023

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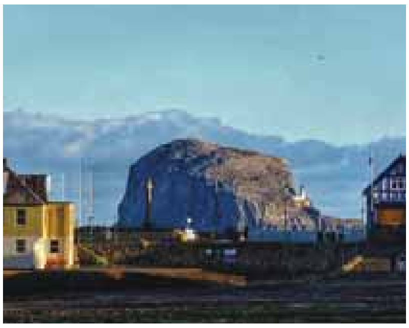

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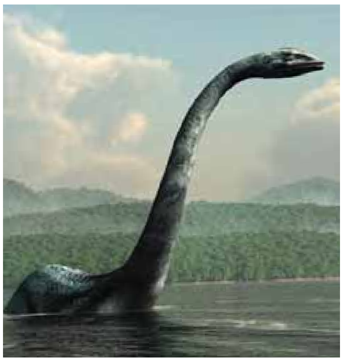

“A large reptilian creature with a long wavy neck lumbered across the road”

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Gowan
A daisy or white field flower

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AYE!

A nine-carat gold toilet seat is one of the strangest items that's been taken into a Glasgow pawn shop.

More amazing Scottish facts
page 128

Cover Picture: LOWER LARGO HARBOUR, FIFE, ALAMY

Sheila Fleet

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PPA Scotland Magazine Awards
Best Specialist Local News Site 2018
The Drum Online Media Awards
Lifestyle Magazine of the Year 2017
ACE Newspaper and Magazine Awards

Kaye Adams

The Scottish TV and radio presenter, journalist, author and podcaster was born in Grangemouth and studied at Edinburgh University. Well-known for her work on the ITV daytime show *Loose Women*, she has recently launched a podcast called *How To Be 60* and also appeared on the 20th series of *Strictly Come Dancing*. Here she reveals her favourite Scottish places. *See page 8*

Polly Pullar

A writer, conservationist, naturalist and photographer, she has contributed to *The Scots Magazine* for more than 30 years. She is also a wildlife rehabilitator with a passion for owls and red squirrels. Her 10th book is a memoir, *The Horizontal Oak – A Life In Nature*. This month, she interviews artist Clare Mackie, who has always been inspired by wildlife. *See page 91*

Laura Brown

Award-winning editor, blogger and writer, Laura has been awarded Consumer Magazine Writer of the Year in the PPA Scotland Awards and writes on a range of topics. A regular contributor to *The Scots Magazine*, her popular series *The A to Z of Great Scots* continues in this issue with Heather Black, who helped to save lives during Edinburgh's HIV epidemic. *See page 89*

Kenny MacAskill

The MP for East Lothian has a passion for the political and social history that has shaped the country today. This is reflected in his most recent book *Radical Scotland*, which looks at the rise of Thomas Muir and other political martyrs of the 18th century. This month, Kenny tells the story of a Scots soldier who found his life's work in South Africa's fledgling Labour movement. *See page 118*

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KAYE ADAMS

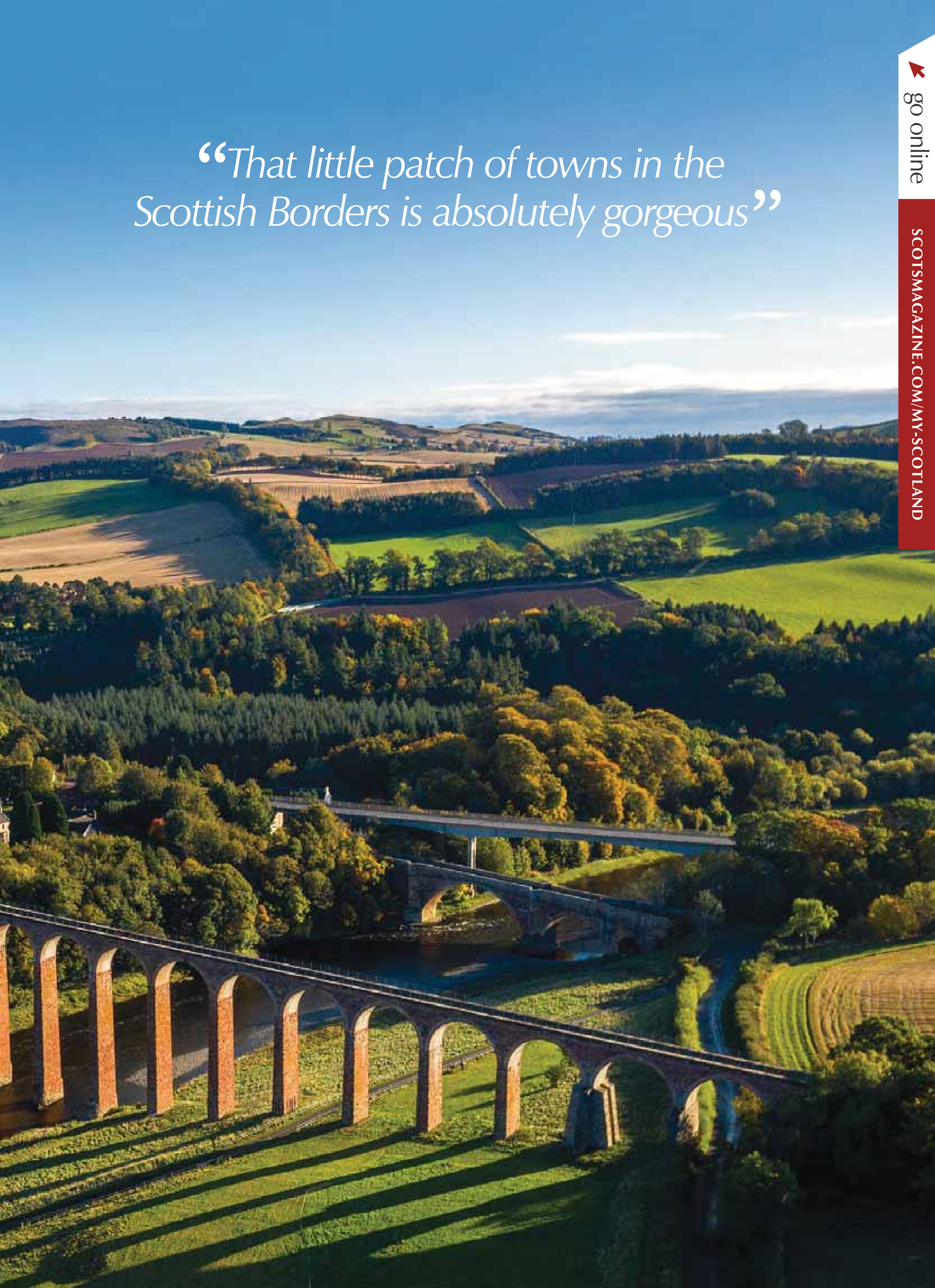
my Scotland

The popular Scottish broadcaster takes us on a tour of her favourite Scots spots

by BRIAN McIVER

Leaderfoot Viaduct, Melrose

> *“That little patch of towns in the Scottish Borders is absolutely gorgeous”*



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SCOTSMAGAZINE.COM/MY-SCOTLAND

People go on about the Cotswolds, but that little patch of towns in the Borders is absolutely gorgeous. I visited a friend in Stow, near Galashiels, recently – you really don't know what's underneath your nose, do you? It's so nice, with lovely little shops and cafés – really beautiful.

On the Eildon Hills, Melrose

I love the Barras and, funnily enough, I record my podcast there, in an old shipping container turned into a studio. I have happy memories of it with my mum, dad and brother when I was a kid. When I moved to Glasgow, my first flat was almost completely furnished from there. It's just so full of character.

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The Barras

> “I had four happy years in Edinburgh”

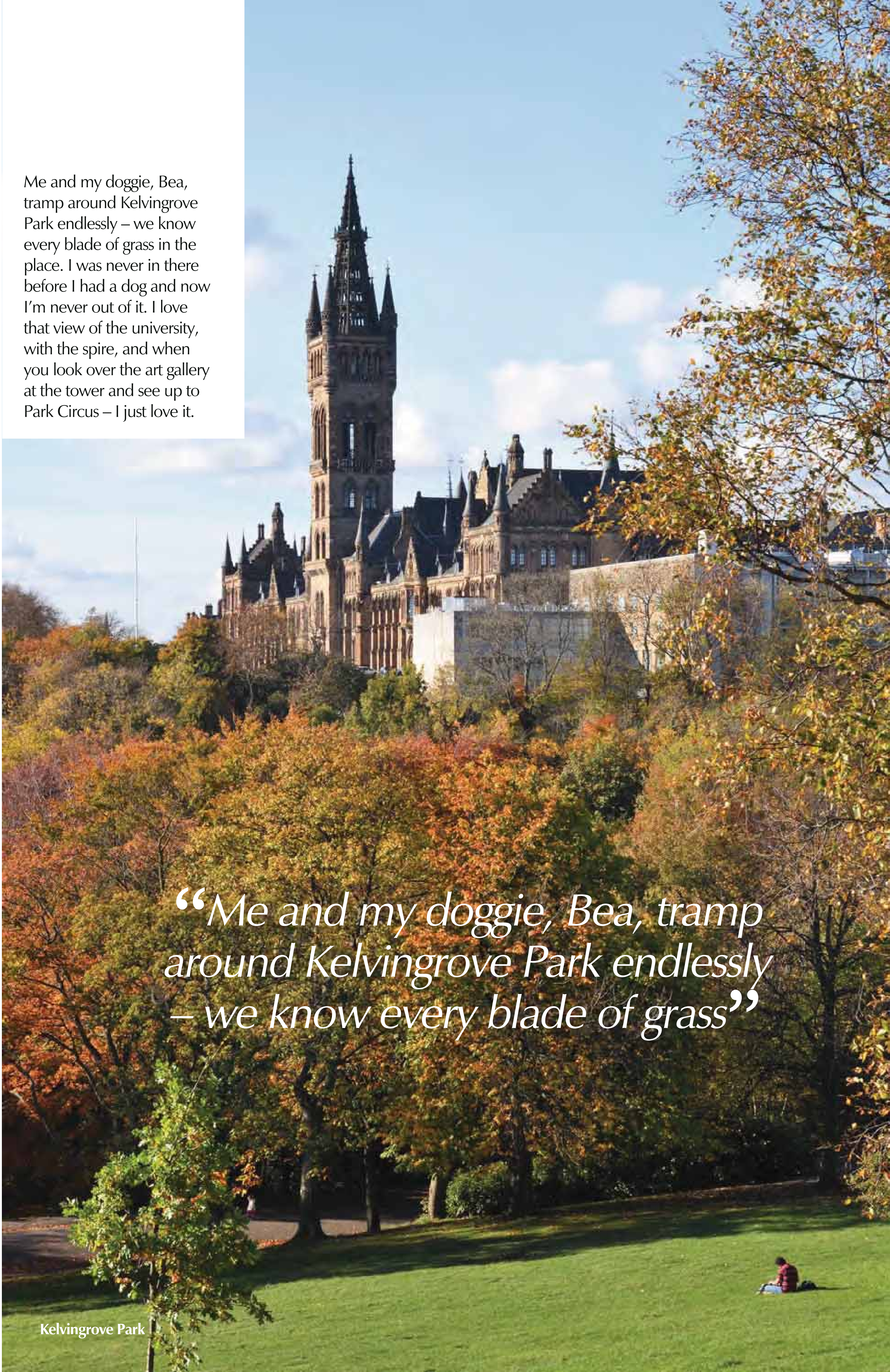
Edinburgh

I went to university in Edinburgh and it’s such a beautiful city – my daughter is studying there now, so that’s quite nice. I studied economics and politics, and I had four really happy years there.

Burntisland

I love Burntisland, I used to go there with my mum. My gran was in a nursing home in Fife for quite a few years so my mum and I would visit – I was quite young so we’d go to Burntisland, just as a bit of a diversion, and I absolutely loved it. I keep thinking I should go back – I’ve not been since the ’70s. I have such fond memories of it, particularly with my mum, because we would head there on a Sunday and plod about.

Me and my doggie, Bea, tramp around Kelvingrove Park endlessly – we know every blade of grass in the place. I was never in there before I had a dog and now I'm never out of it. I love that view of the university, with the spire, and when you look over the art gallery at the tower and see up to Park Circus – I just love it.



> "Me and my doggie, Bea, tramp around Kelvingrove Park endlessly – we know every blade of grass"

Kelvingrove Park

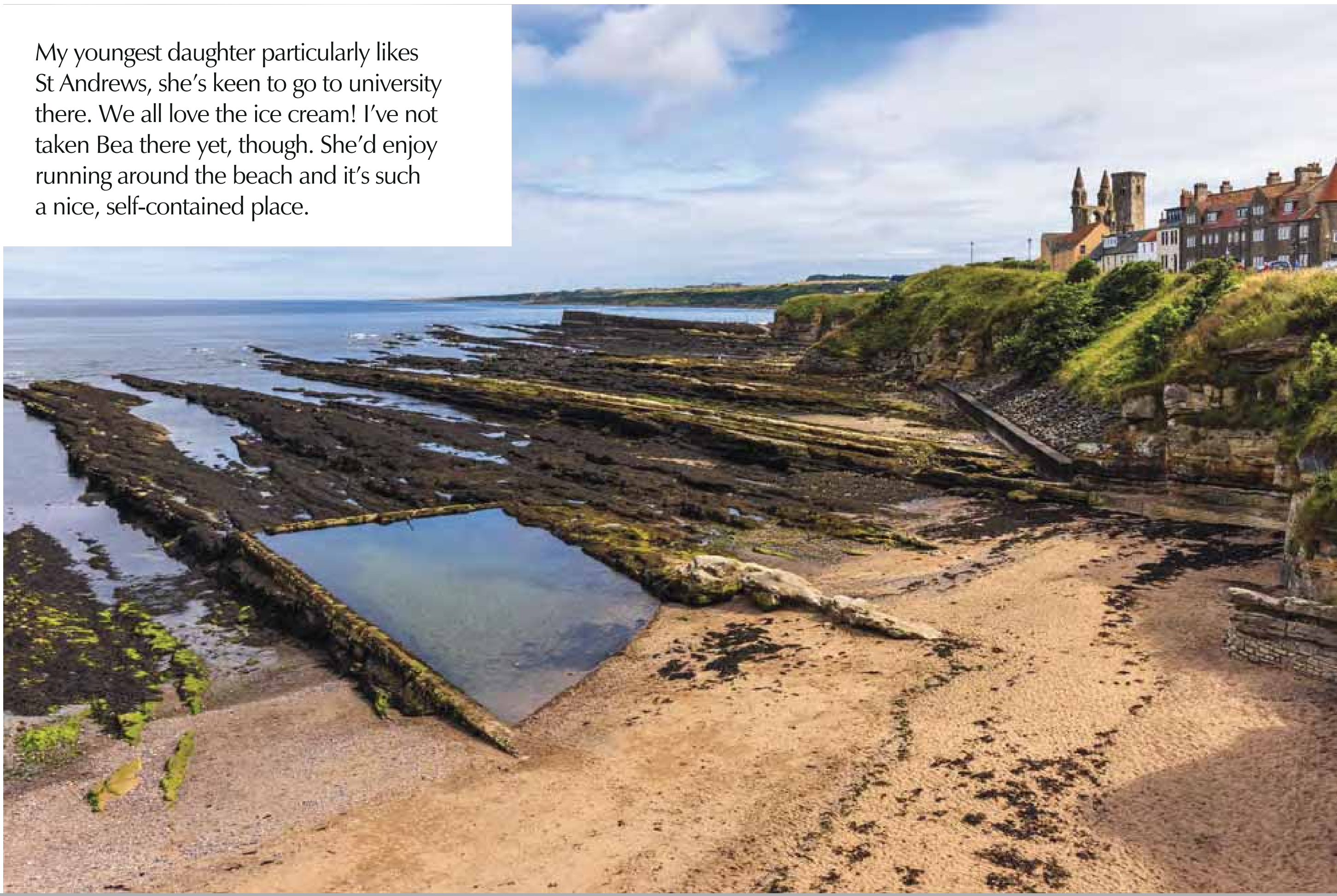
Pictures: ALAMY, REX\SHUTTERSTOCK

We used to go to the Peebles Hydro for the weekend every year as a family – as kids, we had such a sense of freedom running about. Me and my brother, we'd be hanging about with all the other kids we'd meet there. I have some very fond memories of those holidays. Should I take my kids there? They're now 20 and 15 – they'd tell me to do one, wouldn't they!

Left: Peebles

Below: St Andrews

My youngest daughter particularly likes St Andrews, she's keen to go to university there. We all love the ice cream! I've not taken Bea there yet, though. She'd enjoy running around the beach and it's such a nice, self-contained place.



#OutAndAboutScotland

We live in a fabulous country for adventures.
Share yours with our social media hashtag...

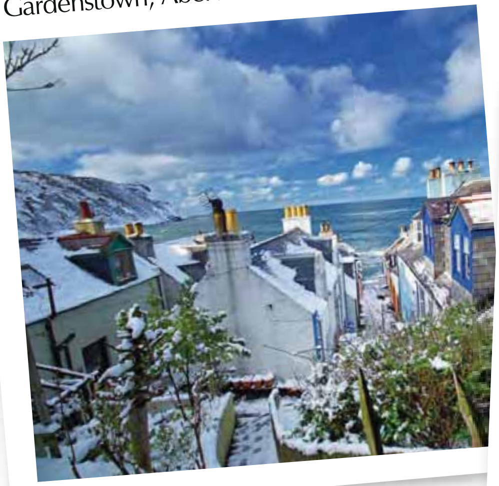
@photo2aquarell
Beautiful Fair Isle
– cute puffins.

Mark Sedgwick
The Sedgwick family at beginning of Ben Nevis trail.

@connormclarenphotography_
I love exploring ruined castles, especially with the added bonus of some nice light!

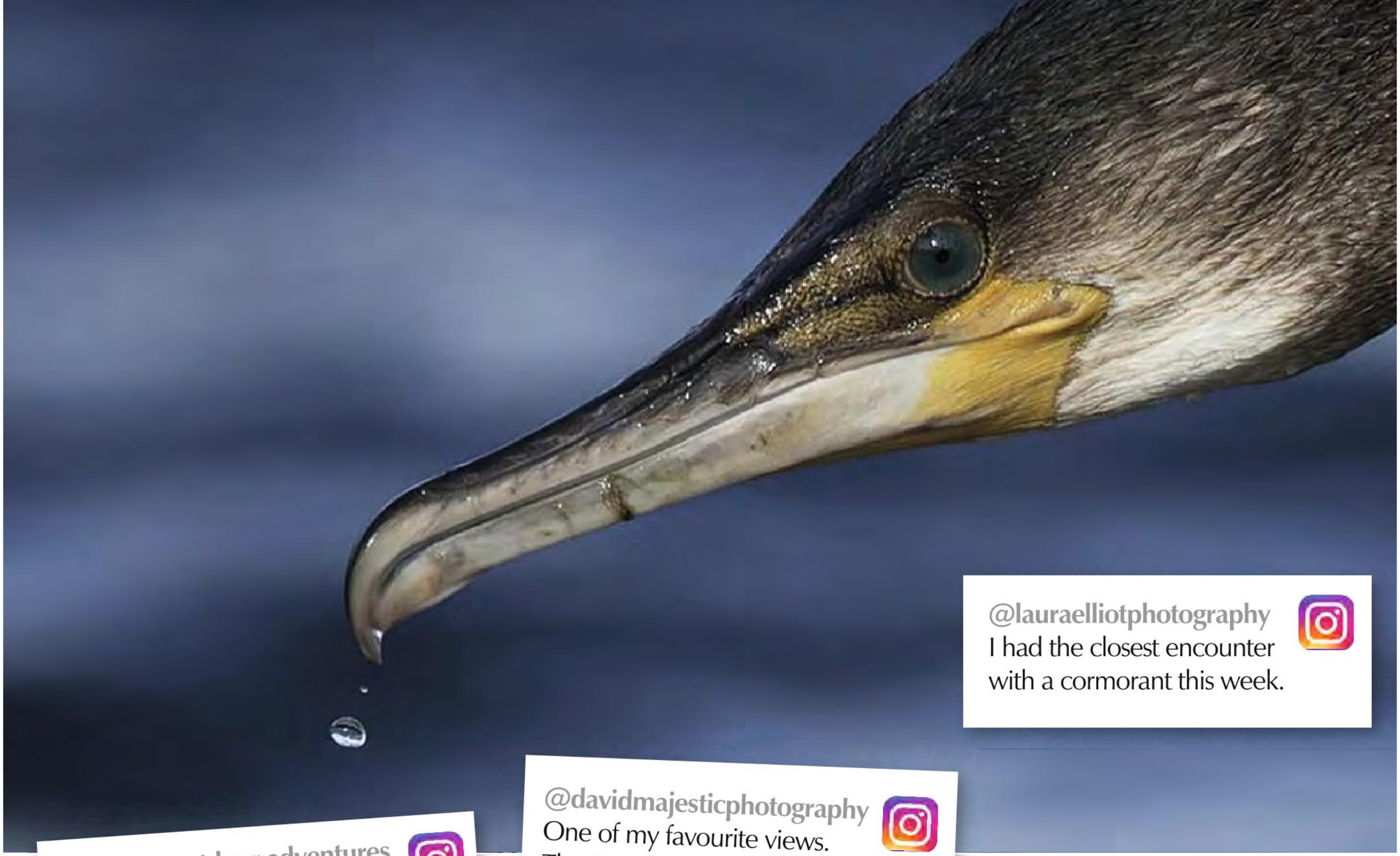
@CHPhotography15
The Scotland Selfie postcard. The stacks with views across to Coigach and Assynt from Sgorr Tuath.

@gordo_rob
Gardenstown, Aberdeenshire.



@stevie_skye
The game is afoot.

@ danielmaclean
Some gorgeous cloud formations over Beinn a' Bha'ach Àrd and Bac an Eich.

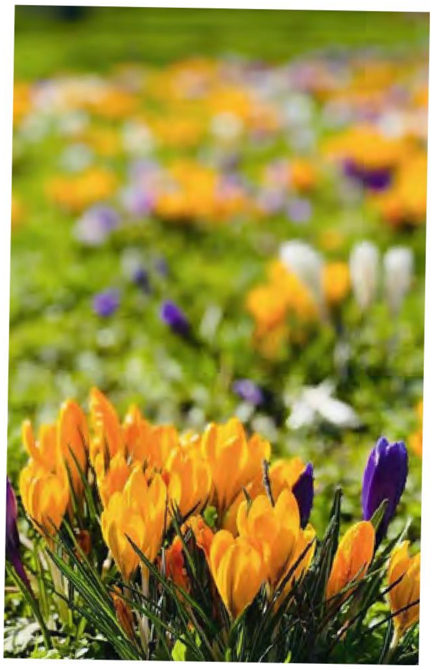


@lauraelliotphotography
I had the closest encounter with a cormorant this week.

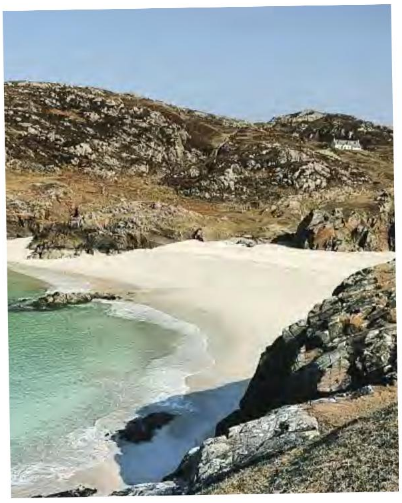
@dianes.outdoor.adventures
I'm in the 100 club. Ben More, Isle of Mull, 966m. Munro number 100.

@davidmajesticphotography
One of my favourite views. The Bass Rock sitting perfectly between the lifeboat station and the houses at North Berwick Harbour.

@scottjamespryde
Harmony springs...



@lauras.adventures.x
Just booked a few sites for our NC500 trip in six weeks, so excited!



@FrancisMcCaffe2
Glen Coe is a glen of volcanic origins, in the Highlands of Scotland.

Share your #OutAndAboutScotland pics with us on Twitter, Facebook or Instagram for a chance to be featured next month!

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Discover @Scots_Magazine

Head to Instagram to meet the team behind *The Scots Magazine*!

Editor Robert and collie Storm travelled to Arran with a couple of friends for a long weekend in their campervan. They had an amazing time climbing all sorts of hills, swimming in the sea and enjoying the best food and drink this beautiful island has to offer. Collie Storm clearly imagines he's mostly human and as much a part of the gang as anyone – to the extent he likes to chill out on a chair after a hike! ▼

▲ Designer Dawn and her family took a trip down to Auchmithie Beach to search for treasure. Only a few crab shells and rusty anchor parts were found, though! Did you know the original Arbroath smokie is thought to hail from Auchmithie, a small fishing village that lies just three miles north of Arbroath?

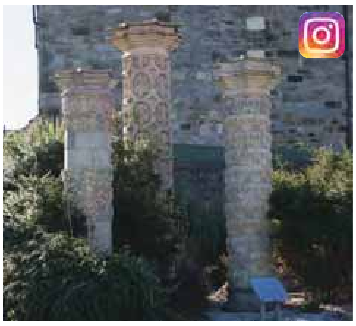
Designer Ailsa, far left, is pictured with her Dundee Thistle CC clubmates before they all endured part two of the Angus Bike Chain CC Monikie Duathlon Series, held within Monikie Country Park and surrounding area. The race consisted of a four-kilometre run, followed by a 21.5km cycle, and another four-kilometre run to finish. ▼

▲ Deputy production editor Catriona enjoyed a long walk with friends at Monifieth Beach. Her two boys and her friends' dog Bramble were more than happy to clamber on to this concrete block to pose for a picture!

Pictures: REX/SHUTTERSTOCK, MONIKIE DUALTHON by SHIRLEY GIBSON

Legendary Scotland

The latest nugget of intriguing Scottish history from our friends at @LegendaryScotland



Coade stone pillars

For 90 years, this trio of Coade stone pillars stood in the garden of Portobello's Argyle House.

Quite how they got there is a mystery – though the two smaller pillars are similar in design to the chimneys of Dalmeny House in South Queensferry, so it's thought they might have been destined to be fancy chimney stacks.

The larger pillar is different, however, and probably wasn't meant to be a chimney, adding to the conundrum.

The pillars were put into council storage in 1989, where they stayed for 16 years.

In 2005, it was decided that they should be part of the new community garden on Portobello Promenade.

A team of stone conservators repaired them, removed old paint and replaced the missing crowns of two of the pillars.

The nature of Coade stone means that, despite their age, the pillars look almost new. Described as an "artificial stone" in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, it was used for moulding high quality neoclassical statues, architectural decorations and garden ornaments.

The pillars are an intriguing and beautiful focal point of the garden, and well worth seeking out if you're in the area.

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A Wee Blether With…

David Cunningham

Above: Glasgow Royal Concert Hall

The Scottish mature student who's proving it's never too late to learn

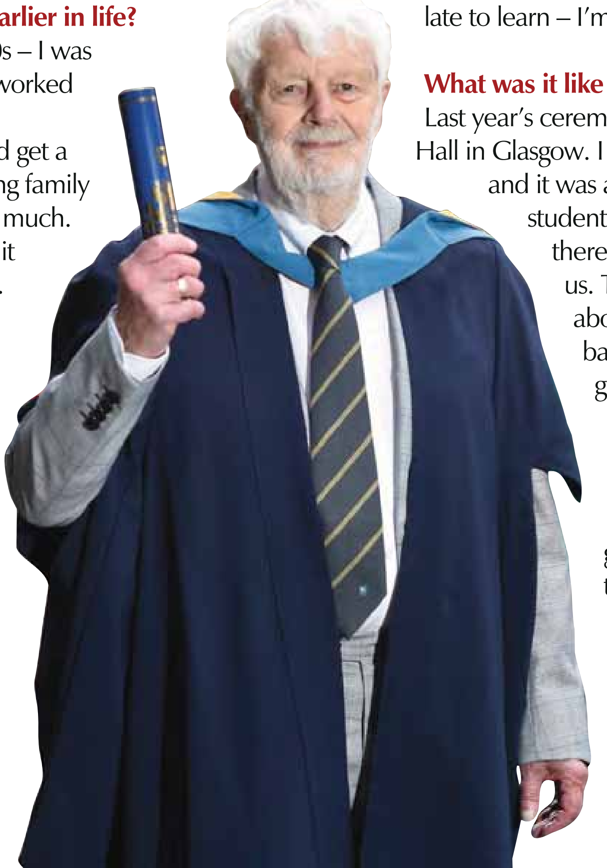
You're 90 years old – are you Scotland's most mature mature student?
Ha! I believe there's a 92-year-old studying at degree level, so I have a bit of catching up to do. I'm probably second oldest, right enough. Maybe I'm the oldest in Fife!

What are you studying and where?
I'm studying for my fourth degree – a BA in criminology. I graduated last year with a Bachelor of Law degree. My first graduation was in 2011, in English literature and creative writing. All have been with The Open University.

Why did you return to education?
In 2009 my wife, Jan, was admitted to a care home – she had dementia. I was able to visit three times a day, but I felt I needed something to occupy my mind. Jan has sadly passed away now and I miss her terribly.

Did you consider university earlier in life?
I went to university in the 1960s – I was a mature student even then! I worked in agricultural sales and if I had a degree, it would mean I could get a promoted role. But with a young family and a day job, it all proved too much. I didn't graduate and regretted it – it felt like unfinished business.

Why law and criminology?
Simply because I find it fascinating and I love learning. People think criminology is all about serial killers and the like – it's not. I've been spending a lot of time studying environmental crimes and things that perhaps aren't so obvious.



What do your family think of your academic success?
I have two daughters and a son – they're very proud of me. And happy I'm keeping myself out of trouble.

Would you recommend returning to education?
Absolutely – it's been great for so many reasons. It's kept me busy and active, and I've met so many interesting and wonderful people. I've learned so much. My only wish is I could go on and have a career in the fields I've studied – I might have left that a bit late, though. If you're 40 and thinking about it, just do it.

What's so special about The Open University?
It's open to anyone, as the name suggests! You don't have to study a degree – there are courses at all kinds of levels and you don't have to have formal qualifications.

University straight after school – and even school itself – isn't for everyone. The OU means it's never too late to learn – I'm certainly proof of that.

What was it like to graduate?
Last year's ceremony was at the Royal Concert Hall in Glasgow. I won't deny that I felt proud, and it was a lovely day. The youngest student graduating was just 19 – there was a full 70 years between us. That's another great thing about OU – people of all ages, backgrounds and experiences get to meet and learn together.

What's next for you?
Well, at 90 you really do take each day as it comes! I feel great – everyday I'm grateful for the state I'm in. I feel the same as I did when I was 60. In fact – I feel like Superman. I might just go on forever! Ⓢ

Words: ROBERT WIGHT Pictures: ALAMY, JULIE HOWDEN

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Around Scotland

Your pick of the top events from across the country

by HANNAH McLAREN

Goatfell, Arran

Arran Mountain Festival

May 12-15, Isle of Arran

This is the perfect opportunity to meet like-minded people, discover a fascinating island and have unforgettable days in the safe hands of experienced local mountain leaders.

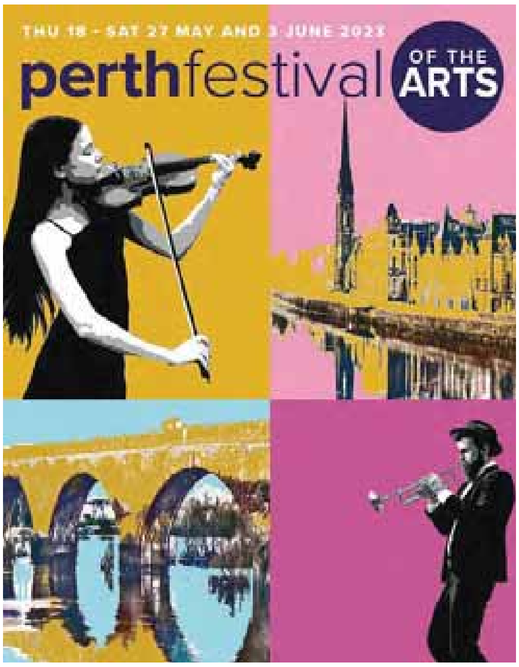
www.arranmountainfestival.co.uk

Perth Festival Of The Arts

May 18-27, Various venues

Each May, Perth Festival becomes the gem in Scotland's cultural calendar. With performances in Perth Theatre, Perth Concert Hall and other venues, this 10-day festival features the best in classical music, theatre, rock, folk, jazz, literature and visual art.

www.perthfestival.co.uk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Edinburgh Marathon

May 27-28, Edinburgh

Expect a very busy weekend in the capital, with multiple events to choose from. These include the junior races – for those aged from three years old up to 18 – as well as relay team runs and the half or full marathon.

www.edinburghmarathon.com

Turn the page for more… »

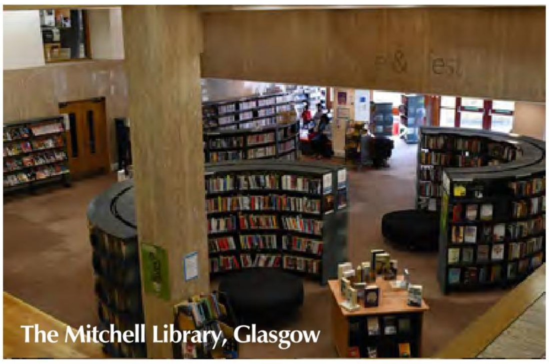
Scottish Opera performers

Dumfries & Galloway Arts Festival

May 20-28, Various venues

A host of events – including music, dance, literary and theatre – featuring both local and international performers. The festival also supports creatives in some of the region's most rural areas, providing a world-class performing arts programme.

dgartsfestival.org.uk


The Mitchell Library, Glasgow

Aye Write!

May 19-28, Various venues, Glasgow

This Glasgow book festival, founded in 2005, celebrates the best in national, international and local writing. It's held across two weekends every year, with big names and emerging talent on the 2023 programme.

www.glasgowlife.org.uk/arts-music-and-cultural-venues/aye-write-glasgows-book-festival

Exclusively Highlands Craft & Food Fair

May 20-21, Wildwoodz, Inverness

This Highlands craft and food fair brings together a truly gorgeous and eclectic mix of Scottish art, craft, food and drink in a beautiful location. The fair is set is in the heart of the Wildwoodz adventure park, across both the Archery Field and Wild West Village.

www.exclusivelyhighlands.co.uk/events

Wildwoodz

It's A Knockout

May 6, Strathclyde Country Park

Teams of 10 people work together to complete a series of fun games and tasks in the beautiful setting of Strathclyde Country Park. Registration costs £10 per person, or £100 per team. Team members are asked to raise £100 each – or £1000 per team.

www.st-andrews-hospice.com/event/its-a-knockout-6-may-2023/

Ideal Home Show Scotland

May 26-29, SEC Glasgow

From inspiring ideas to innovative products and on-trend solutions for your home, the Ideal Home Show Scotland brings together hundreds of brands to shop from. Enjoy live talks from top celebrities, the latest technology and fresh ideas from a team of experts.

www.idealhomeshowscotland.co.uk

Traditional Music Festivals

Edinburgh Tradfest

April 28 – May 8,
Various venues

Tradfest's roots go back to the Edinburgh Folk Festival – it was launched by Traditional Arts and Culture Scotland in 2013 to provide a distinctive platform for folk arts in the capital city. Edinburgh is a hothouse of talent, both home-grown and visiting, and Tradfest is an opportunity to see it all in play.

www.edinburghtradfest.com

Orkney Folk Festival

May 25-28,
Various venues

From its small beginnings in 1982, the Orkney Folk Festival has become one of the most special in Scotland. This year, the festival celebrates its 40th anniversary, with Scottish folk legends Capercaillie set to play.

www.orkneyfolkfestival.com

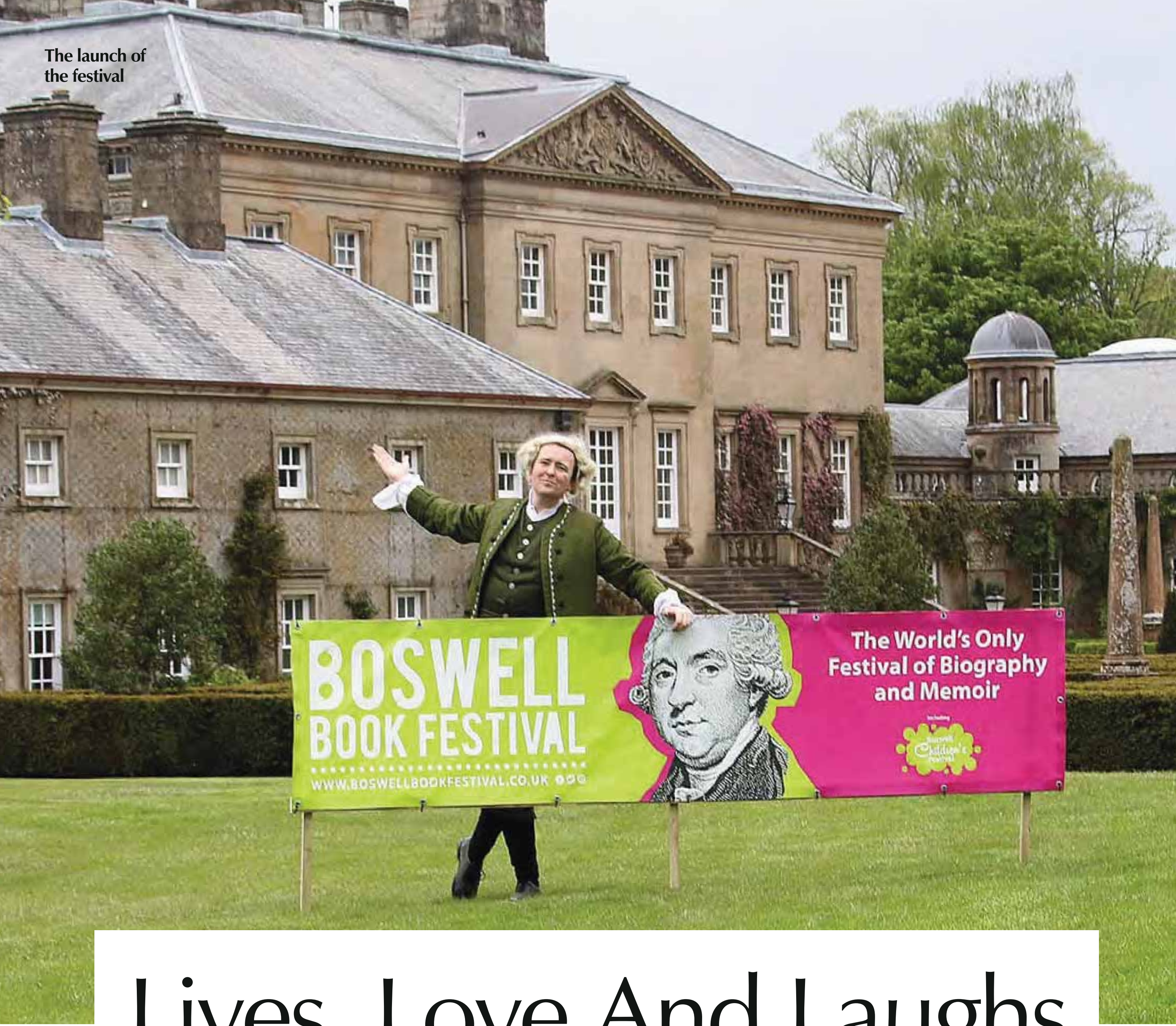
Skye Live

May 12-13, Portree, Isle of Skye

With stunning views of the incredible Cuillin Ridge on one side and The Old Man of Storr on the other, this event stakes a claim for being one of the most beautiful festival sites in the world – and will welcome a thrilling line-up of acts, including Shooglenifty and Peat & Diesel.

www.skyelive.co.uk S

Pictures: REX/SHUTTERSTOCK, ALAMY, RUARI FLEMING


The launch of the festival

BOSWELL
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WWW.BOSWELLBOOKFESTIVAL.CO.UK
The World's Only Festival of Biography and Memoir
Boswell Children's Festival

Lives, Love And Laughs

Scotland's Boswell Book Festival is dedicated to biography and memoir

by PAUL FISHER COCKBURN

LIKE many great events across Scotland, Cumnock's Boswell Book Festival – which this year is marking its 12th anniversary – ultimately grew out of someone's love, enthusiasm and determination.

Caroline Knox isn't just the weekend-long book festival's director, it was actually her idea.

Back in 2010 she was involved in the creation of The Boswell Trust, a charity aiming to promote not just "heritage, literary arts and education", but also to restore the mausoleum in Auchinleck Churchyard built to the memory of the 18th-century Scottish biographer, diarist and lawyer James Boswell – best known for his biography of contemporary English writer Samuel Johnson.

Caroline and her fellow trustees believed that Boswell's reputation was "far less than it should be, allowing for the importance of him in literature among Scottish writers".

The trust is now partway through its work on the mausoleum, but early on Caroline felt something else needed to be done. She says, "I'd come from working at a publisher, John Murray Press, so I thought, 'What can I do that's of any use in Ayrshire?'

JAMES
BOSWELL

Above left: Caroline Knox

Above: A quiet moment with a good book

Left: The audience listens to one of the guest speakers

“It’s quite an eclectic programme”

“There was no local book festival and there was also this need to promote Boswell, so I thought, ‘Let’s roll Boswell and biography together as a theme.’”

The first Boswell Book Festival took place in 2011. “We were very lucky, we started at Auchinleck House, and then we outgrew it, and have been equally lucky moving to Dumfries House, in rural Ayrshire.

“We are currently the only festival dedicated to biography and memoir in the UK.

“Some might say there must be a good reason for that, but I’ve yet to find one, because it really leaves you with such a magnificent choice of subjects and books to choose from,” Caroline says.

“Really, when you look at the bestseller lists, memoirs – the lived experience – are something that people love.”

Caroline enjoys reading non-fiction, but it was an out-of-the-blue hunch that others would be sufficiently focused on biography, travel writing and journals to make such an event viable, let alone sustainable.

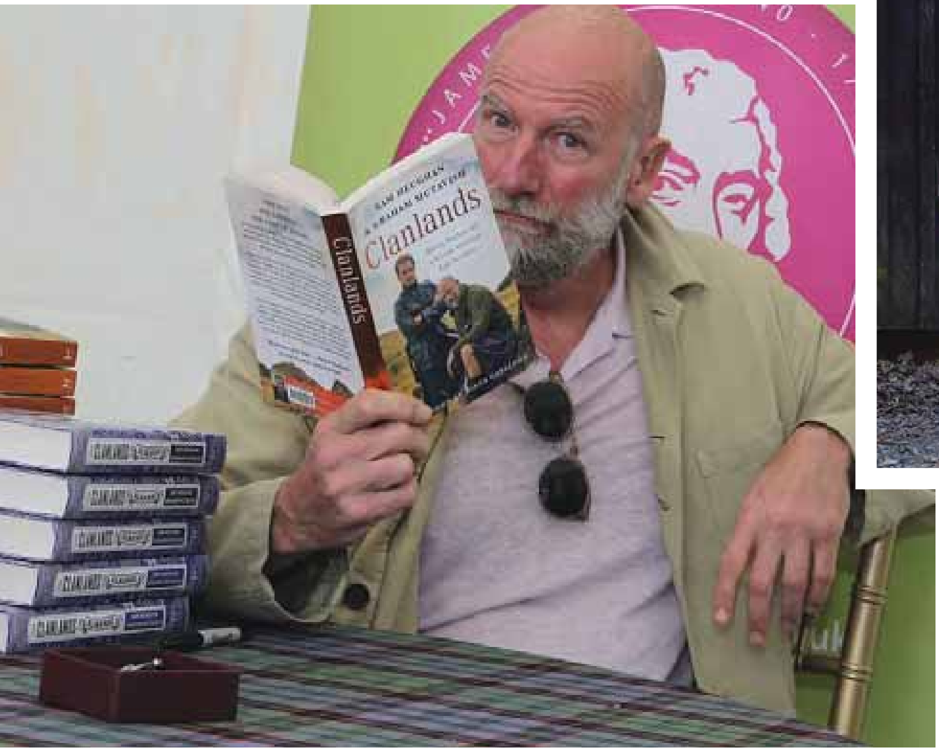
She says, “I wanted a festival that would appeal to everybody and would stand on its own.

“I hope we’ve achieved that because we are very lucky to have such strong local support for the festival, as well as statistics for why people come to the festival – often because of the unique theme.”

The discipline of restricting the festival to non-fiction, specifically biography and memoir, Caroline believes, is “actually very interesting and very enjoyable”.

She plans every programme like a publisher’s seasonal list, in that she’ll avoid focusing on too many books on the same subject or even the same genre of writing.

“You want variety and you want something for everybody, so far as you can – you’re looking at what books are being published in a given year, so you »



Above: Children ready to get reading

Left: Graham McTavish enjoys his *Clanlands* book, written with Sam Heughan

> "Memoirs are something that people love"

can't always cover everything you'd like to. We do rove across a very wide range of subjects."

Caroline accepts that Scotland's book festivals, themed or not, are likely to end up having some of the same authors turning up – that's inevitable.

"But I think ours is quite an eclectic programme, which is fun, and the theme allows you to go deeper.

"I try to combine people who are recognisable from TV or popular media with talks where I know we won't get huge audiences – I really think we want to give the stage to some people who are perhaps starting off," Caroline says.

"It's a real mix. Within the programme I try to make sure that, if you've come for a certain type of book, there'll be enough in the programme – since we have three talks running simultaneously – that you would be happy staying there for several talks, because you'd find enough to interest you.

"However, I quite understand that some people will only want to come out to see one talk by somebody who they really admire or that they'd love to see in the flesh.

"I genuinely think that different people coming with different aspirations or requirements will find enough in our programme to keep them happy, and the great aim is to try to keep them with us for more than one talk.

"Often they'll come for one and then sign up for others – although that was slightly broken by Covid."

Like many arts events during the last three years, the Boswell Book Festival "pivoted" online. While she's enthusiastic to be once again offering a "face-to-face" event, Caroline says lessons have been learned.

"What we did learn from coronavirus was that we are what you would call a 'rural festival', in that getting to us means using a car, and that there were people who could never get to us, who were now picking us up because we were streaming some of the events. So we're going to continue to stream some of our events.

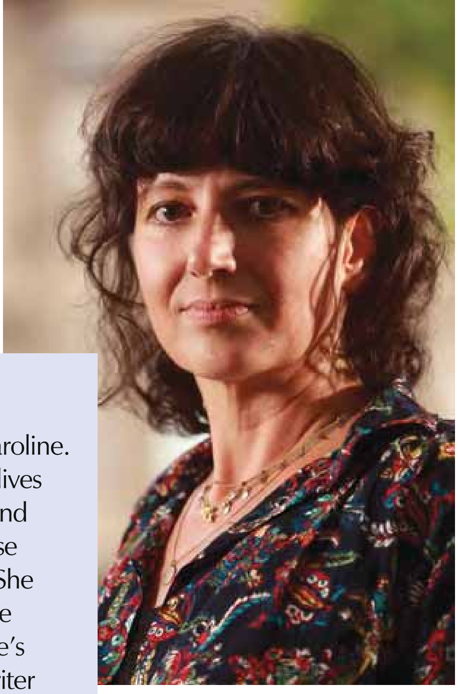
"We discovered audiences outside our normal geographical remit during lockdown, again because of the biographical theme, and we wanted to keep them."

More than a decade on, Caroline remains enthusiastic about the festival, not least because – as its reputation for quality continues to spread – it's attracting more writers who had previously been unable to attend.

"There are certain writers I'm thrilled to have this year, because we've asked them in the past and they've been unable to come," she says. S

The Boswell Book Festival takes place from May 12-14. Visit www.boswellbookfestival.co.uk

Bestsellers, Boulders And Biographers...

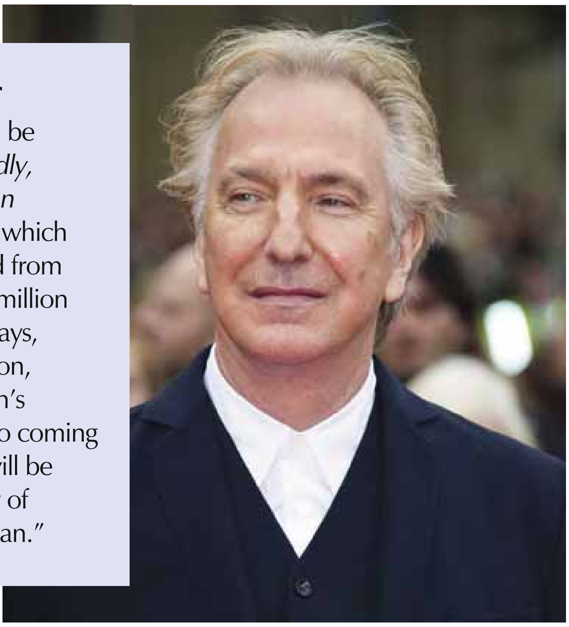


Kapka Kassabova

"I love her writing," says Caroline. "She is Bulgarian-born but lives in the Scottish Highlands, and her books are all about these hidden parts of the world. She was shortlisted for the Baillie Gifford Prize and I think she's an absolutely wonderful writer – I'm thrilled that she's coming."

Michael Morpurgo

Best known for children's novels such as *War Horse*, he will be a guest speaker at the festival's Dumfries House venue – the home of The Prince's Foundation – for the first time. He will be promoting his new book – appropriately enough – on King Charles III.



Alan Taylor

The journalist will be talking about *Madly, Deeply – The Alan Rickman Diaries*, which Taylor condensed from the original 1.25 million words. Caroline says, "Actor Neil Pearson, who was Rickman's great friend, is also coming and I think that will be a really good way of celebrating the man."

Val McDermid

The Queen of Tartan Noir will be at Dumfries House to talk about her life, including her journey from a Fife state school to St Hilda's College, Oxford, as well as her work as a journalist in the 1980s and her acclaimed career as a crime novelist.

Beatrice Searle

The trained stonemason will be talking about her first book, *Stone Will Answer – A Journey Guided By Craft, Myth And Geology.* "It's an extraordinary book about a large stone she took on a kind of pilgrimage from Orkney across to Norway," says Caroline. "It's really fun to have somebody right at the beginning of their writing career."

Pictures: ALAMY, ALISTER FIRTH, REX/SHUTTERSTOCK

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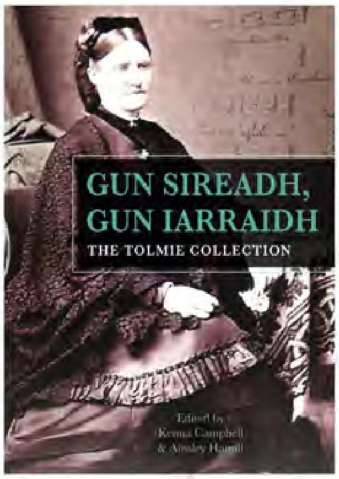

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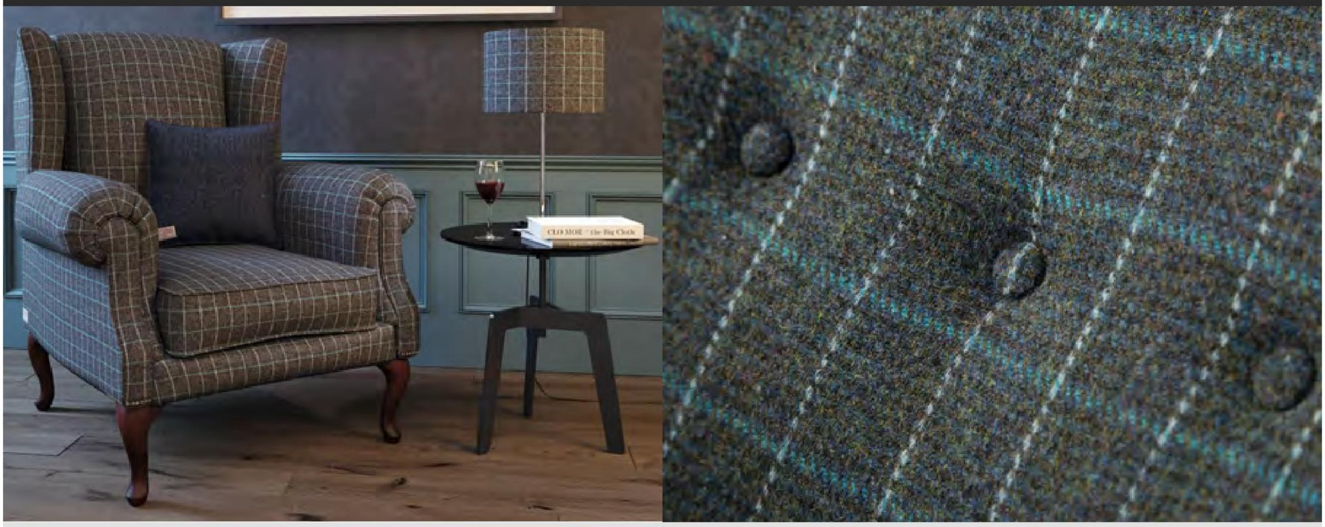

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Big Ideas, Big Stories

The best in global children's theatre is coming to Edinburgh

by PAUL FISHER COCKBURN

WHAT might you expect to find at an international arts festival for children?

For Noel Jordan, director of the Edinburgh International Children's Festival, the answer is simple. "My main search criteria are literally as open as 'theatre and dance for children and young people aged from zero to 14 years'.

"I do interpret theatre and dance quite broadly and, in this edition more so than ever, have embraced more circus-style physical theatre work," he says.

"Many of the companies in the 2023 edition have never performed at the festival before. The companies are mostly from western Europe, but we do have a co-production with Quebec and France."

Noel Jordan

Scottish work, he insists, will always be at the core of the programme – this year there are two Scottish productions.

Noel is from Australia, and came to Edinburgh well aware of the festival's international reputation. He says, "Companies see being selected for presentation as a real honour – indeed, after their exposure here, they often receive touring offers from all around the world.

"It is always important to see productions live in front of an audience but sometimes, due to where they might be based and whether or not there is other work to view in the same visit, it might not be logistically possible – this means I watch a lot of video submissions.

"I do programme from this avenue, but most of the work in EICF is programmed live from attendance at festivals around the globe."

So what makes a great "Edinburgh" show? "I love productions that connect our hearts and our minds," Noel says. "I love theatre that moves us emotionally and makes us think about the world we live in.

"Het Houten Huis and Nordland Visual Theatre's production, *I… er… Me*, is a great example. We marvel at the visual spectacle on stage as the single room rotates 360 degrees and the set changes from kitchen to bathroom to aquarium.

"On a deeper level, this work is dealing with mental health and an individual who is beginning to lose his grip on reality in a very visual and tangible way," Noel says.

"The piece captures the essence of what attending a festival is all about – seeing exciting and dynamic works from afar that connect us as humans and help us understand our lives in new and different ways." Ⓢ

Edinburgh International Children's Festival runs from May 27 to June 4. Visit **www.imaginate.org.uk/festival**

Edinburgh International Children's Festival

Left: Children take part in a pop-up performance

Below: A show at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh

Pictures: ALAMY

The Lucrative Legend

Myth or reality, Nessie is big business when it comes to Scottish tourism

by JUDY VICKERS

AS they drove along the side of Loch Ness 90 years ago, Aldie Mackay yelled, "Stop! The beast!" to her husband John.

The manager of the nearby Drumnadrochit Hotel had just spotted a whale-like creature churning up the water like a "simmering cauldron".

This, however, was not new news to locals. As the *Inverness Courier* said when it reported the Mackays' sighting on May 2, 1933, "Loch Ness has for generations been credited with being the home of a fearsome-looking monster."

Reports of something in the murky waters of the 37-kilometre (23-mile) long loch begin with St Columba in AD 565, when he is credited with banishing a water beast preying on locals next to the River Ness.

Nessie kept her head down until 1527. Then there were sporadic encounters, although the world took little notice until the Mackays' sighting, perhaps because the paper's editor coined the phrase "Loch Ness Monster".

LOCH NESS INVESTIGATION

On lookout

Then in July of that year, George Spicer and his wife reported a large reptilian creature with a long wavy neck which lumbered across the road and into the water.

And in November 1933, the first photograph was snapped by Hugh Gray. The blurry image was said by some to be Gray's pet Labrador, but with the publication of the so-called "surgeon's photograph" in 1934 Nessie went global.

Pre-pandemic, the Loch Ness Monster was estimated to bring in £41 million to the Scottish economy and attracted around half a million visitors a year. There have been 1144 recorded sightings, including one by Lachlan Stuart in July 1951 who photographed three humps rising from the water – they turned out to be hay bales – and footage of a large hump travelling rapidly in 1960 by Loch Ness expert Tim Dinsdale.

Explanations include waves, boats, otters, seals, rotting tree stumps, deer swimming in a line and even elephants from visiting circuses enjoying a bath.

> *"The Loch Ness Monster brought in £41 million to the economy"*

An artist's impression

Movies, books and other hoaxes – including a dead elephant seal and a photo of a flipper, both in the '70s – followed, but there have been more serious scientific probes, too. A study in the 1960s found that only the top layer of water changes temperature, which in calm weather creates an effect that make objects look larger.

Operation Deep Scan in 1987 saw 24 boats scan the loch using sonar. One startling find was huge underwater waves called internal seiches which can move objects – such as monster-shaped logs – with great speed on calm days. And one of its most intriguing discoveries was three large, unexplained, crescent-shaped moving objects.

If there is something large lurking down there, those who have dedicated decades to solving the mystery reckon Greenland shark, wels catfish or Atlantic sturgeon are the most likely species – although the most recent study in 2018, which looked at DNA in the water, uncovered a lot of eel DNA.

With the largest volume of fresh water in the UK, and its deepest trench plunging more than 268 metres (880 feet), Loch Ness might just be hiding more secrets. S

A sub ready to search the loch

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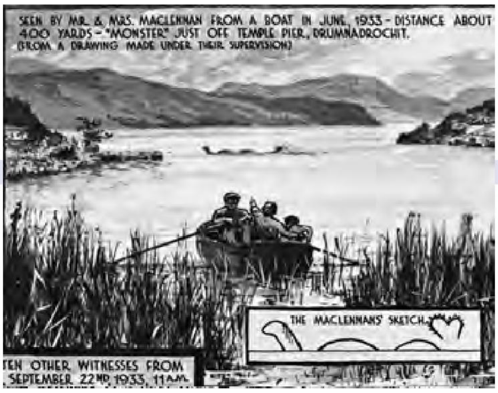
Loch Ness, Scotland

Below: What a witness described


SEEN BY MR. & MRS. MACLENNAN FROM A BOAT IN JUNE, 1933 – DISTANCE ABOUT 400 YARDS – "MONSTER" JUST OFF TEMPLE PIER, DRUMNADROCHIT.
(FROM A DRAWING MADE UNDER THEIR SUPERVISION)
THE MACLENNANS' SKETCH
TEN OTHER WITNESSES FROM SEPTEMBER 22ND 1933, 11AM.

A Monstrous Deception

The 1933 sightings sparked a national passion for monster-hunting, bolstered by the offer of a £20,000 reward from a circus for Nessie's capture – by autumn, there were Scouts in boats, folk in deck chairs on the lochside and a fleet of reporters from London.

Among the latter was Marmaduke Arundel "Duke" Wetherell, an actor and big game hunter, for the *Daily Mail*. He duly found giant four-toed fresh footprints in the mud in December. The Natural History Museum in London concluded they were made by a hippo-foot umbrella stand.

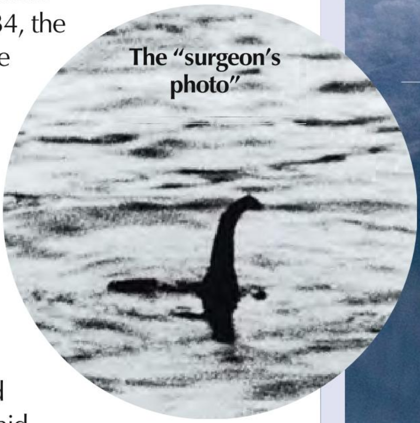
In a huff at being exposed, Duke set up another prank. It wasn't much more sophisticated, involving a 35cm Woolworths toy submarine and putty – but it was to fool the world for decades.

The story was that surgeon Robert Kenneth Wilson, driving along the side of the loch, had noticed a commotion in the water and grabbed his camera.

On April 21, 1934, the *Daily Mail*'s headline screamed "London Surgeon's Photo of the Monster – Monster Yards from Lochside" and a legend was born.

It was only in 1994 that Duke's stepson, 93-year-old Christian Spurling, said, "It's a load of codswallop." The photos had been taken in early April 1934. Very early April...

The "surgeon's photo"



Pictures: ALAMY, REX/SHUTTERSTOCK

Finding Hope In Lost Valley

The TV adventurer and author believes Scotland saved his life

by MARK FINDLAY SMITH

SIMON REEVE isn't sure why he chose Scotland, but he knew he had to go somewhere.

His life was a mess – he was depressed, he'd considered suicide. His instincts told him he had to find some purpose and meaning in his life. And 500 miles later, he found it – deep in the Lost Valley of Glencoe.

Even now, some 30 years later, Simon is still uncertain what took him to Scotland. He had no family connections in the country and, for a lad growing up in inner-city London, the Highlands was a pretty distant place.

But the effect was striking – he came back from Glencoe a better version of himself, he says, and ready to grasp what life had to offer.

There's a good chance you know what happened next. Simon Reeve – the boy who, in his own words, "fell through the cracks" – became one of television's most popular documentary makers, specialising in exotic and sometimes dangerous destinations, most recently exploring South America for the BBC.

It's fair to say he's relishing the way his life has turned out. But how he got to this point is complicated.

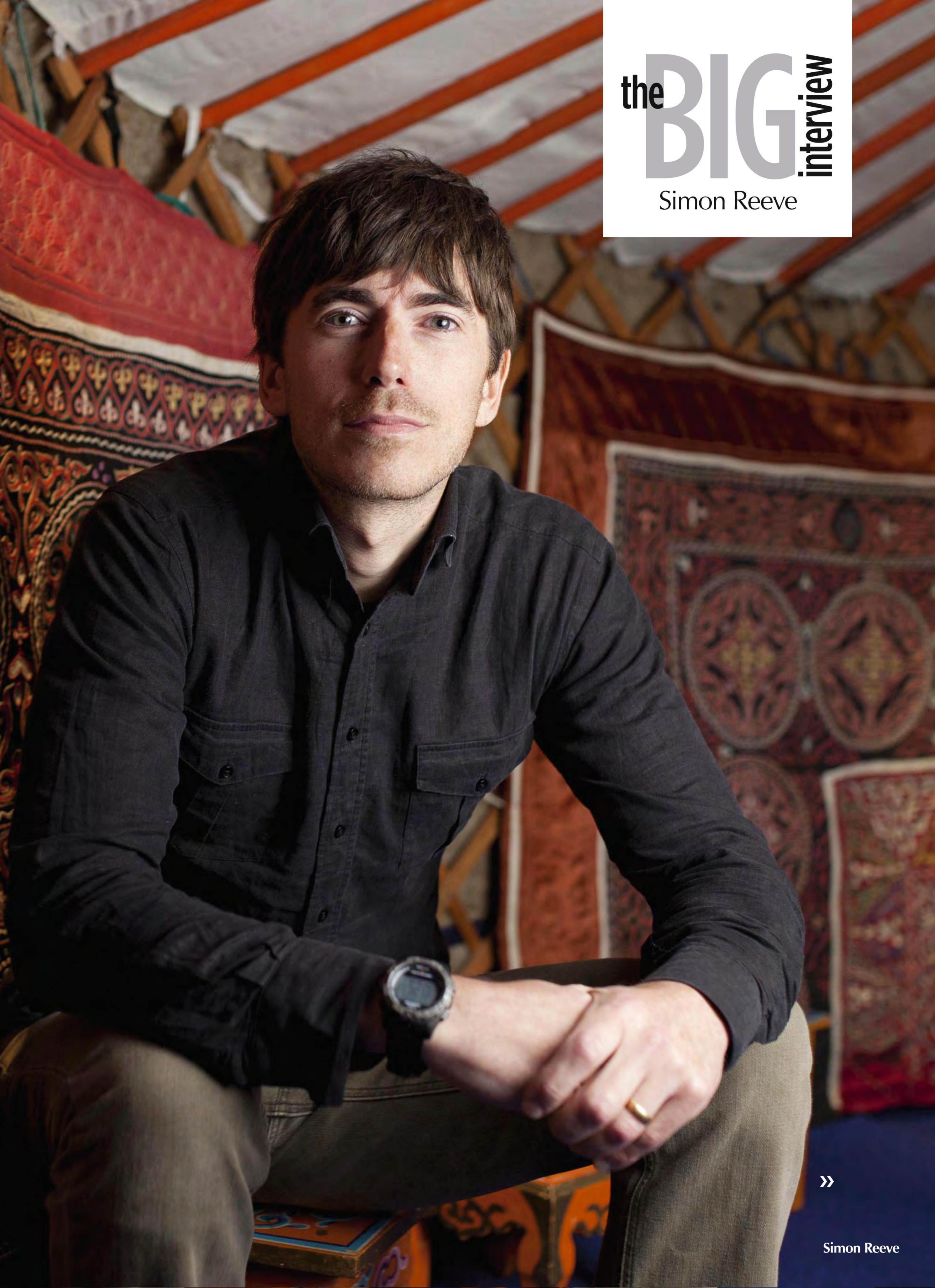
Simon, who's 50, now lives on Dartmoor with his wife and 11-year-old son. He loves it there, but says that even now he sometimes finds it hard to settle.

Part of him still pines for city life and there are times when he's creeped out by the fact he can walk his dogs for hours and never see a soul. He struggled with the isolation and repetitiveness of the Covid-19 lockdowns – what does a traveller do when he can't travel?

Simon says it also took him a long time to discover that travel was what he actually wanted to do with his life, having grown up in a place – Acton in west London

the BIG interview

Simon Reeve



»

Simon Reeve

> *“There’s a part of me that has always wanted to be Scottish or Welsh or Irish”*

– where he felt like he didn’t fit in and struggled to find motivation.

“I was quite lost and didn’t swim well in that large pool,” he says. “It’s a scary time as well, being 12, 13, 14, at a comprehensive in inner London or any city.

“People forget, as an adult, how frightening it is – I used to fear getting stabbed on the way to school every day. My life was really keeping my head down, it certainly wasn’t about raising it above the parapet.”

Simon says he had a particularly difficult time at school and describes himself in his mid-teens as a pathetic young lad. “I flunked out of school with basically no qualifications,” he says. “I was on the dole, I was very depressed and suicidal – I was a really lost lad.

“I fell through the cracks – university wasn’t an option and nobody in my family was in a trade that I could easily follow. I floundered and sank, and I found myself on the edge of a bridge.”

Simon says he genuinely could have jumped, things were that bad, but instead something pulled him back – which is where Scotland comes into the story.

“I went on an adventure to Scotland and climbed up into the Lost Valley. I found a bit of physical self-confidence that I hadn’t had before,” he says.

“I’ve often thought back to that time in the decades since – the sheer critical value of us having wild places and being able to experience a bit of wild life is essential.

“It was also a profound moment of change. I came back from the Lost Valley improved, and a slightly better version of myself, and was able to grasp a bit more of life. Scotland saved me. Scotland really, genuinely, saved me.”

On why he thinks he chose to go to Scotland in that moment of crisis, he laughs and says it might be because he and his mate Dwight used to watch the VHS of *Highlander* so much.

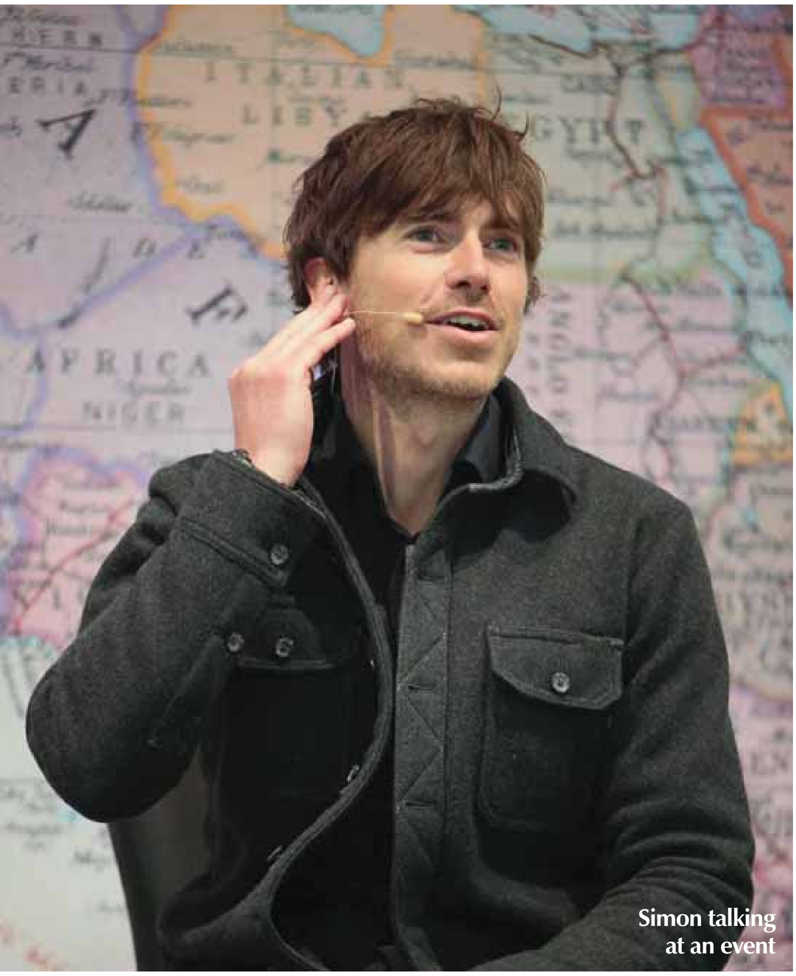
“I loved *Highlander*,” he says, “and there’s been a part of me that has always wanted to be Scottish or Welsh or Irish. I think it’s more tribal or cultural.

“I grew up on the edge of inner-city London, when it was almost certainly the most diverse city that’s ever existed on Earth, and for me as a relatively working-class white lad there just wasn’t a culture for me there.

“I’m one of those people that’s from anywhere rather than somewhere.”

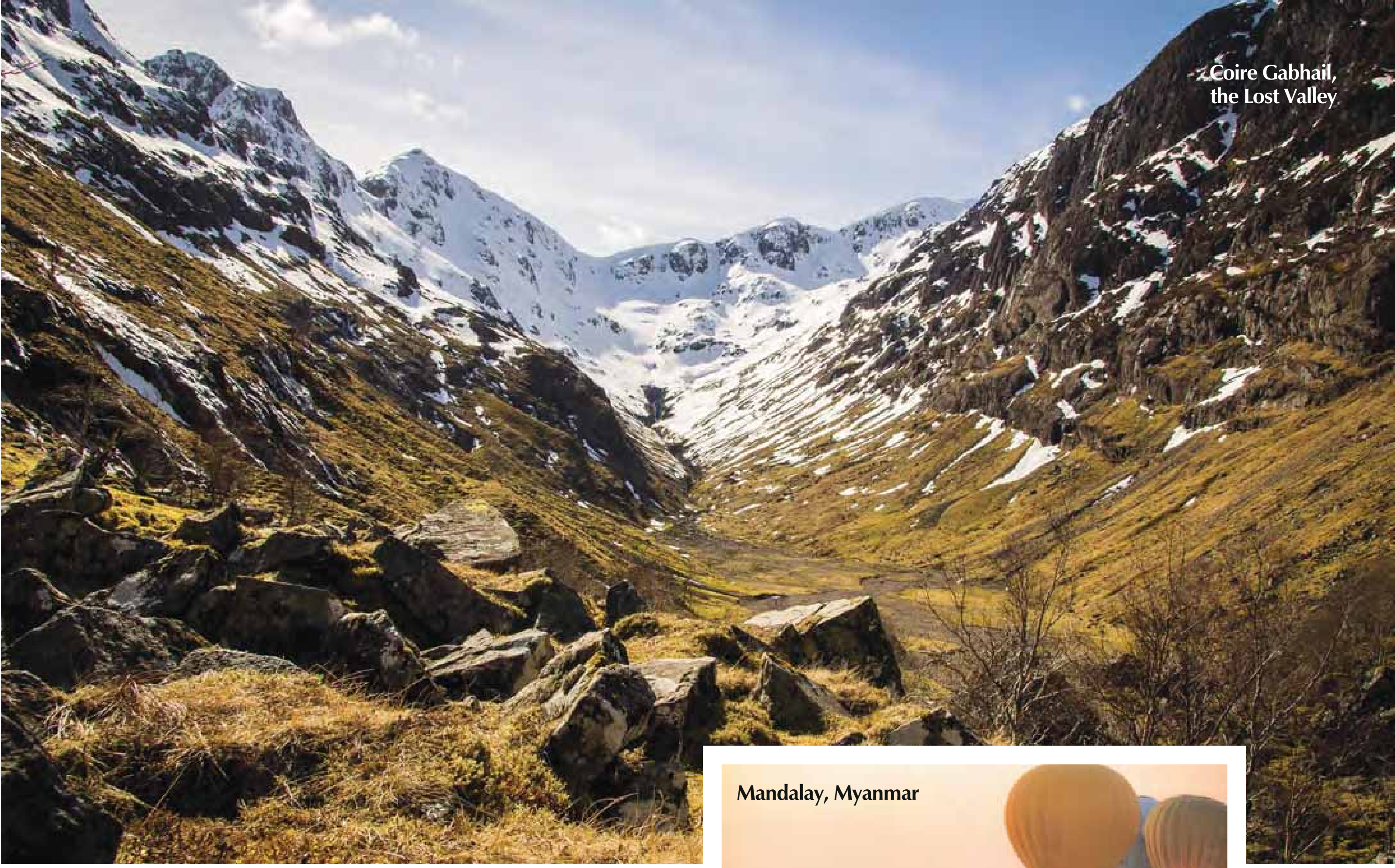
Simon thinks this lack of identity can still be a problem for young men today.

“We’re very bad as a country, still today, shockingly, at guiding young men like me,” he says. “They’re in that



Simon talking at an event

London


Coire Gabhail, the Lost Valley

Mandalay, Myanmar

hinterland. I've been held up by 13-year-olds with Kalashnikovs and you don't think of them as boys.

"They're looking for purpose and meaning, and it's more critical than we realise. A lot of our identity issues nationally can be traced back to what is basically a profound need for clan, community and tribe.

"I did wish, and I still do now, that I had more of an identity that I could own myself and pass on to my son."

Simon says he's realised over the years of making documentaries that a sense of identity and contentment can often come from travel – a job he got into following a number of lucky breaks.

Having worked as a postboy on *The Sunday Times,* he started helping out on investigative reports before writing a book on al-Qaeda. He then became a regular TV pundit on terrorism, which is where the BBC spotted him and asked him to make documentaries.

FASCINATING FACTS

Simon has been arrested for "spying" by the KGB, chased by cheetahs in Namibia and gone hunting with the Bushmen of the Kalahari.

He has travelled to more than 120 countries around the world, making multiple award-winning TV series.

In 2013, he appeared in *The Great Comic Relief Bake Off* with Warwick Davis and Duncan Bannatyne.

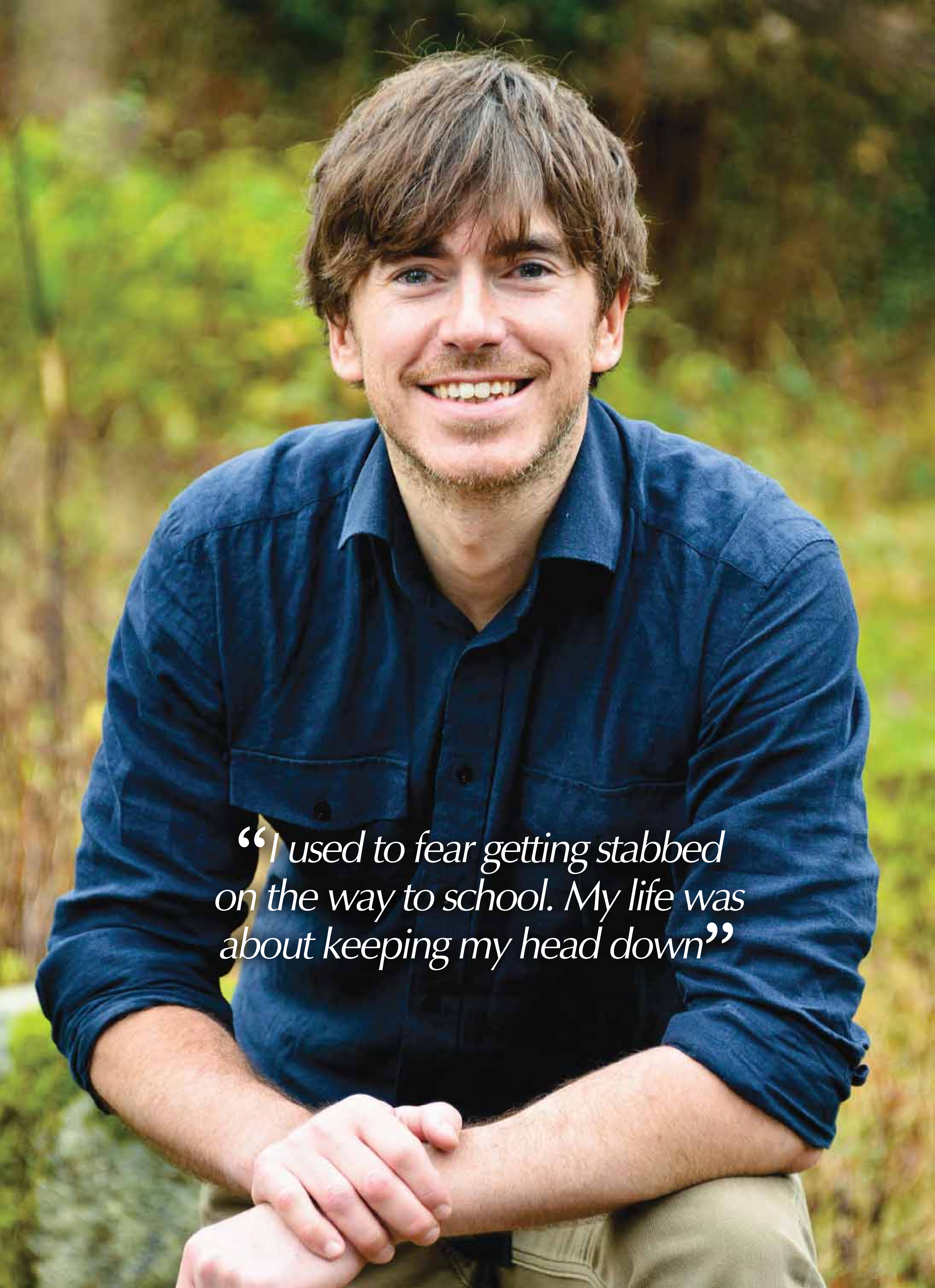
Having made more than 25 TV series, he obviously still delights in the job and says there are moments he's had abroad – swinging over a river in Burma or joining an El Salvadorian SWAT team – where he's felt so alive that every bit of him is heightened.

"It genuinely has given me some totally unbelievable experiences and moments, and it's hard to convey in a sense because so much of what we see on TV is staged and scripted and posed and sometimes faked.

"We genuinely haven't done that – we put ourselves into situations which are spine-tinglingly beautiful and also stomach-churningly scary. I'm an emotional wreck as a result of it, but I wouldn't have it any other way!"

Simon is also a defender of what he sees as the right to travel, even in a world where he's seen the damage it can do. "We've made ourselves gods on our planet," he says, "and we need to think more carefully and intelligently about how we protect it in the long term."

He also believes governments should be investing much more in protecting parts of the world where biodiversity is directly threatened by human activity. »



“I used to fear getting stabbed on the way to school. My life was about keeping my head down”

Left: Simon Reeve

Below: Buchanan Street, Glasgow

Right: Coire Gabhail, the Lost Valley

However, Simon also believes tourism has a positive part to play.

"Travel and tourism provide people around the planet with an economic incentive to look after wild spaces, national parks and marine protected areas," he says.

He also believes there was proof of it during the pandemic, when poaching, land grabs and deforestation got worse. The return of tourism, he says, "brings more eyes back" and acts as a protecting force.

As for the pandemic more personally, Simon found it difficult. "I struggled a lot," he says. "I struggled with the lack of excitement and I wasn't great at dealing with the 'Groundhog Day' existence. It took a lot of dog walking to find some solace and a lot of exploring locally to realise I could still get pleasure from my travel existence."

Simon also happily admits stress can bring out the less attractive parts of his personality – grumpiness, stubbornness, stroppiness. "I'm different when the TV cameras are rolling," he says. "I can recognise how I come across when the red light goes on."

Sometimes the only thing Simon needs to feel himself again is human contact. In fact – perhaps surprisingly for an adventurer and traveller – given a choice between a busy café in Glasgow and a quiet spot overlooking a fjord in Norway, he says he'd choose the café every time.

"I love the landscapes," he says, "and I love wildlife, but it's human beings I enjoy more than anything."

However, his particular and lasting love for Scotland has only deepened since that trip to Glencoe when he was a teenager.

"Forgive the arrogance or the conceit," he says, "but I do consider that valley in Glencoe, I consider it home.

"It might be on the outer reaches of my home, but I feel a direct geographic and emotional connection to it."

It's not the only Scottish place that stirs the seasoned traveller. On the classic question, Glasgow or Edinburgh, his answer is, "To live, Glasgow. To visit, Edinburgh."

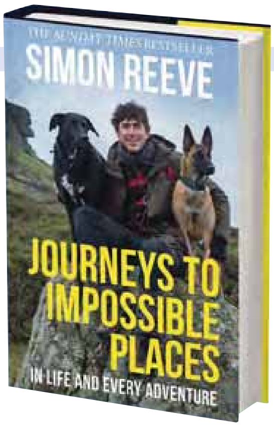
There are also plenty of other places in Scotland that get to the soul of this London boy.

"I've been a lot around planet Earth, but no train journey moves me like the West Highland Line," he says. "And arriving by ferry in to Tobermory is still, for me, a moment to treasure forever.

"Trekking in the Cairngorms is something that can get my heart beating just like travelling in the remotest parts of planet Earth.

"We have such a staggeringly beautiful island. And we have no idea how lucky we are." Ⓢ

***Journeys To Impossible Places* by Simon Reeve is out now in paperback. *Simon Reeve's South America* is available to watch on BBC iPlayer.**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Discover the region's best-kept secrets – including a Cold War bunker, wild walk and tasty local treats

by MORAG LINDSAY

Lochore Meadows Country Park

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SCOTSMAGAZINE.COM/FOCUS

Pictures: FIFE COUNCIL/DAMIAN SHIELDS

»

Taste Of The Neuk

If you're a passionate food-lover, Bowhouse is the place to be

BOWHOUSE FARM is famous among foodies for its weekend markets.

They're why many of Scotland's leading food and drink producers and thousands of visitors converge on this quiet corner of Fife every month.

But it is also home to an expanding food hub, offering some of the best produce from the region all year round.

It's a proper homegrown success story and an essential pit stop for anyone hungering after a true taste of Fife.

Bowhouse is the brainchild of Toby Anstruther, a founding director of the Fife Food Network, whose family have farmed the land between St Monans and Elie for centuries.

It was launched with one intention – to put more of the East Neuk's local produce on to the plates of local people.

Toby hit upon the idea some years ago after speaking to a chef who told him he would love to use more local ingredients, but had to source veg from the Glasgow markets, or even Holland.

Something had clearly gone awry.

The East Neuk produces some of the finest food in the whole of the UK. While it's best known for fishing villages, the lush agricultural land supports farms rearing an abundance of beef, lamb and game, as well as fruit, vegetables and grains.

Don't Miss...
Street food trucks are on hand if you just can't wait to tuck in.

And yet the bulk of this produce was leaving the East Neuk to be processed and sold in the Central Belt and beyond.

There's less leakage now that Bowhouse has become the missing link. It's provided a place to reconnect local suppliers with local people.

Here, seasonal eating and sustainability are key. And at its heart, above all these lofty ideals, it has become a gathering place for people who just really love good food.

The market weekends are a particular highlight – they take place on the second weekend of every month, except January and February, and there's usually a theme.

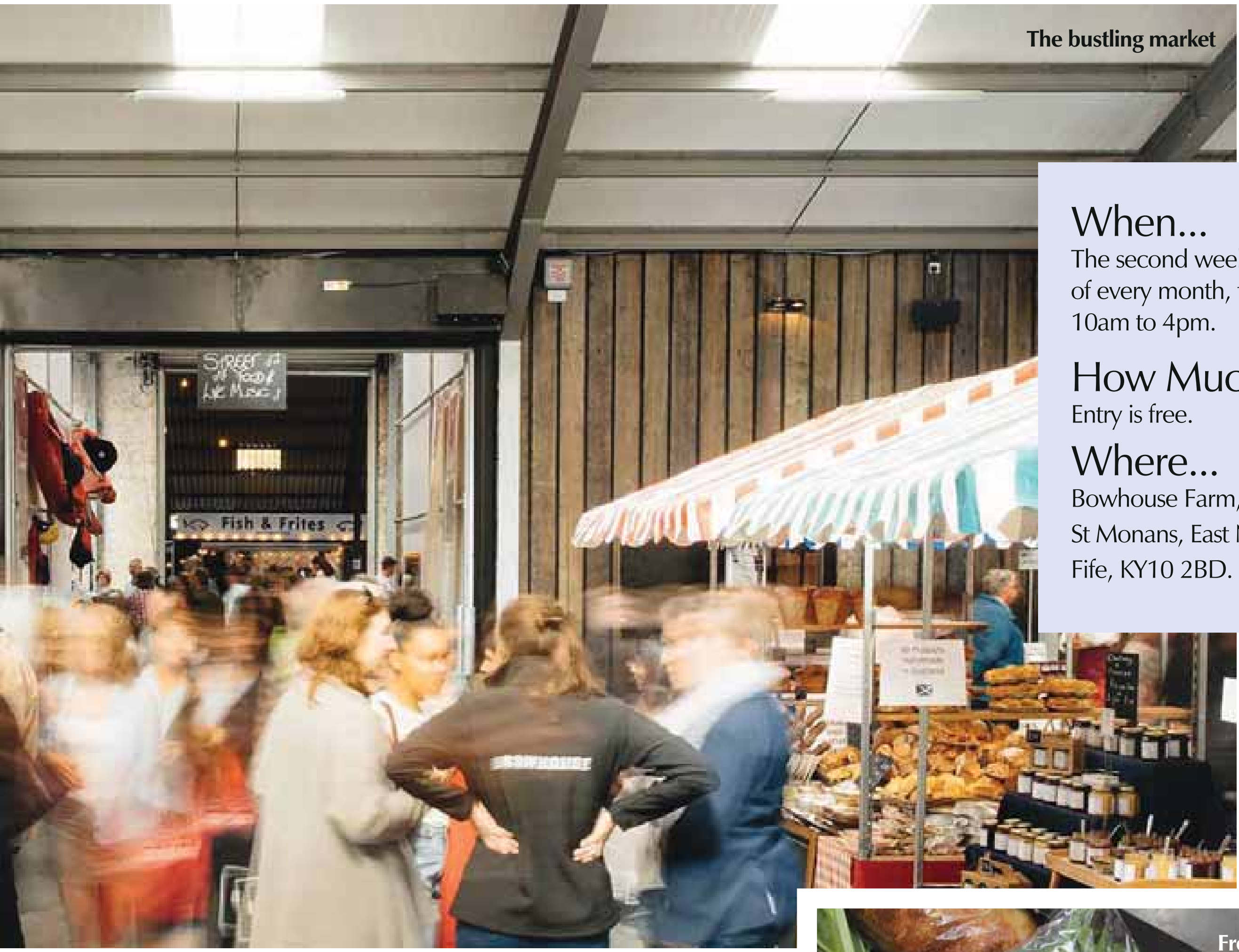
Traders flock from across the country to take part. There are special workshops and cooking demonstrations and visitors can fill their boots in the street food area or tuck into their purchases on the outside seating.

May's market weekend will focus on sustainability, while June's will celebrate Open Farm weekend – with special activities, such as sheep shearing. July's market is titled Hello Summer and August's theme is Meet The Maker.

In addition to the monthly markets, there are now more and more good reasons to visit Bowhouse Farm all year round.

Pictures: JESSICA SNEDDON

Bowhouse Farm



The bustling market

When...

The second weekend of every month, from 10am to 4pm.

How Much...

Entry is free.

Where...

Bowhouse Farm,
St Monans, East Neuk,
Fife, KY10 2BD.

Fresh food

The food hub has provided a permanent base for a growing number of producers, who are normally open from Wednesday to Sunday.

These include the East Neuk Market Garden, which grows more than 50 varieties of vegetables, salads, herbs and fruit without the use of pesticides, herbicides or chemical fertilisers.

Bowhouse Butchery is where organic and grass-fed beef, lamb and wild venison – born and bred on the estate – is butchered, hung and aged.

Angry Kulture specialises in fermented vegetables, such as kimchi, while Scotland The Bread mills organic heritage wheat and rye grain, and the Bothy Kitchen makes meals to finish at home.

At the Baern cafe and bakery, Hazel Powell and Giacomo Pesce work with the estate and other Bowhouse producers to offer a seasonal menu.

The Futtle organic brewery has been set up in a former stable block by Lucy Hine and Stephen Marshall to make use of foraged ingredients, local barley and water from an on-site borehole. The tap room also serves natural wines, sherries and ciders, organic cocktails and guest beers.

Bowhouse manager Rosie Jack said the range of traders was expanding as the centre's reputation grows.

"We have all this amazing produce growing locally and it's no wonder buyers in Glasgow and down south are so keen to get their hands on it," she says. "Bowhouse is our way of putting ourselves in the middle and making sure everyone in the East Neuk gets a chance to enjoy their share, too." »

CONTACT

✉ market@bowhousefife.com
🖥 www.bowhousefife.com

Join The Chain Gang

Fed up with relaxing strolls in unchallenging countryside? Turn things up a notch with a scramble along the East Neuk's Elie Chain Walk

THE next time someone suggests we exist in a world of "health and safety gone mad", suggest they take themselves off to the Elie Chain Walk.

Because if our lives were really being bled dry by an absence of risk and an over-abundance of common sense, this unique stretch of Fife coastline would have been ruled out of bounds long ago.

The Elie Chain Walk features a series of chains and poles attached to the cliffs high – and sometimes not that high – above the North Sea.

Think of it as a bracing day out by the seaside, but with added jeopardy.

Constructed by locals in the early part of the 20th century, the walk – part of the Fife Coastal Path – stretches for barely half a kilometre between Shell Bay and Kincraig Point in the East Neuk.

It packs a lot in, though. There are coves and caves, bays and beaches, geological features and loads to see along the way. There are eight chains in total, some steep and vertical, and warning signs alert visitors to a range of risks – including rock falls and slippery surfaces.

It all makes for an exhilarating experience, albeit one that is ever so slightly bonkers and absolutely not for the faint-hearted.

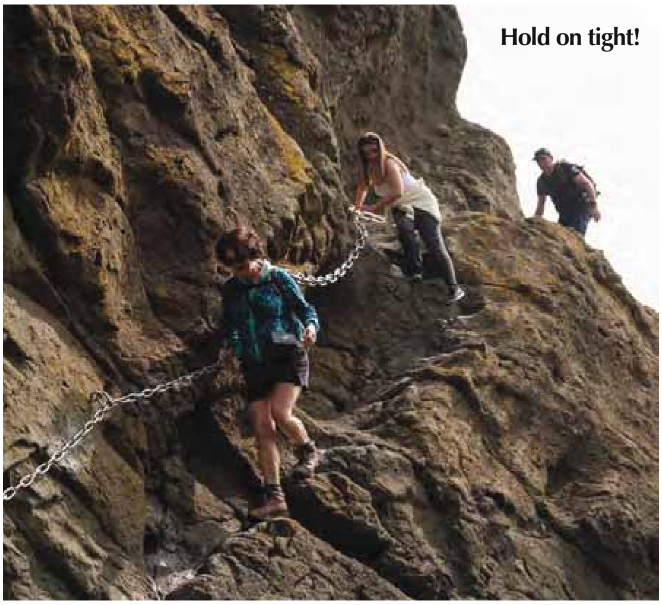
Ross Cunningham is an outdoors enthusiast and proud Fifer, whose Mountains Mend Minds project advocates for the physical and mental health benefits of walking, fresh air and that buzz that comes from accomplishing a new challenge.

The Elie Chain Walk ticks all of his boxes.

"It really is a bit different and not something you would expect to find on the region's coastline," he says.

> "It's one of Fife's most interesting and exhilarating outdoor spaces"

Dramatic views on the walk



Hold on tight!

Getting There

The Elie Chain Walk can be reached from either Shell Bay at Elie Holiday Park or the beach at Earlsferry, Elie.

The Fife Pilgrim Way is one of a collection of walks promoted by the Fife Coast and Countryside Trust.
www.fifecoastandcountrysidetrust.co.uk

Fife Coastal Path
Fife Coastal Path

Pretty Crail harbour

"It takes around 25 minutes to get from one end of the route to the other and it does involve some exposure – you'll need for a head for heights.

"The name is a bit misleading, it isn't a walk, it's very much a scramble, and it should only be attempted when the rock is dry and the tide is completely out."

It's recommended you allow at least a couple of hours before high tide – check the times for Anstruther Easter and Methil on either side.

As well as a head for heights, you'll need decent footwear. A waterproof jacket and warm clothes are advisable, too.

The Anstruther RNLI crew are called out a handful of times each year to rescue adventurers who have come a cropper on the Elie Chain Walk, usually either due to injury or rising tides.

The frequency has even led some locals to suggest the route should be closed.

Ross wouldn't go that far, but he does advise day-trippers to make sure they know what they're getting into and to put their safety first.

"It would be very easy to get caught out, so please make sure you research tide conditions when planning this route," he says.

"But it is definitely one of Fife's most interesting and exhilarating outdoor spaces."

The Elie Chain Walk isn't suitable for wheelchairs, pushchairs or dogs, and it's not recommended for very young children. But there are plenty of other routes across Fife which can be tackled by people of all abilities.

The Fife Coast and Countryside Trust recommends a wide variety of walks, from hikes in the Lomond Hills to fun for all the family at Lochore Meadows Country Park – Fife's most visited outdoor attraction.

There are breathtaking beaches, from the famous east and west sands of St Andrews to quieter spots such as Pettycur Bay and Aberdour's Black Sands and Silver Sands.

And for time-travellers, there's the Fife Pilgrim Way – a 103-kilometre (64 miles) route from Culross and North Queensferry to St Andrews, taking in Scotland's newest city, Dunfermline, and some of the unsung charms of inland Fife.

Launched in 2019, it follows the paths of the medieval pilgrimages which set out to venerate the shrines of St Margaret in Dunfermline and St Andrew in St Andrews between the 14th and 16th centuries.

There are castles, abbeys, churches, woods, wells, caves, lochs and beautiful countryside as far as the eye can see.

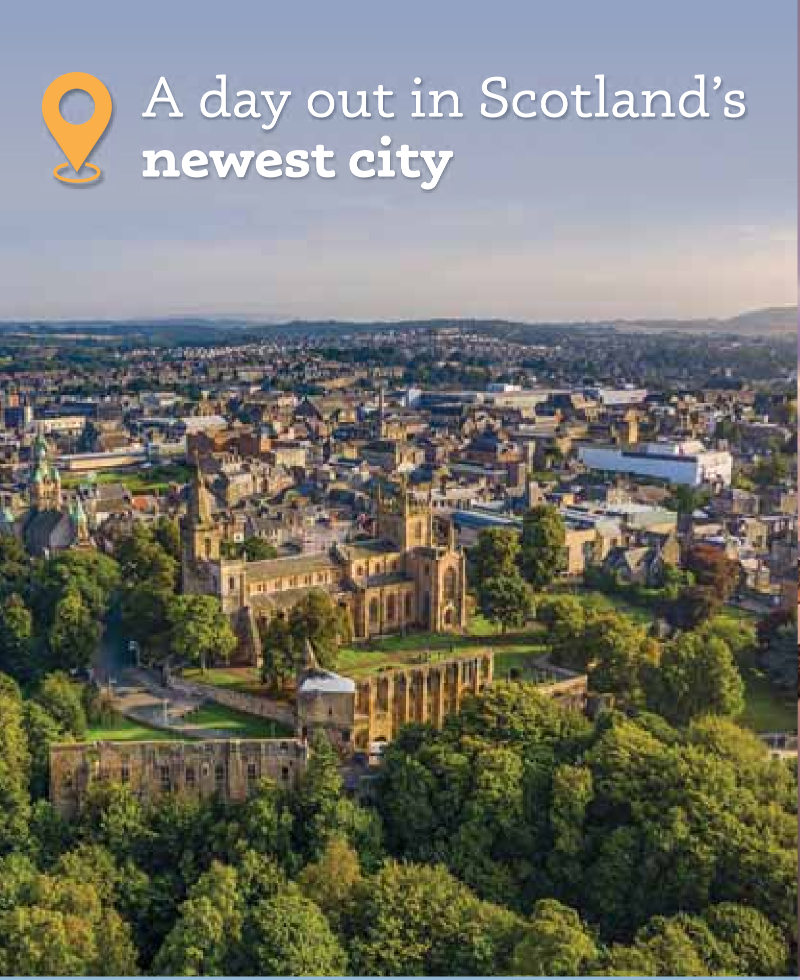
But it is also a fascinating journey through more recent aspects of the kingdom's industrial and social past, including the West Fife coalfields and the new town of Glenrothes. »

Don't Miss...

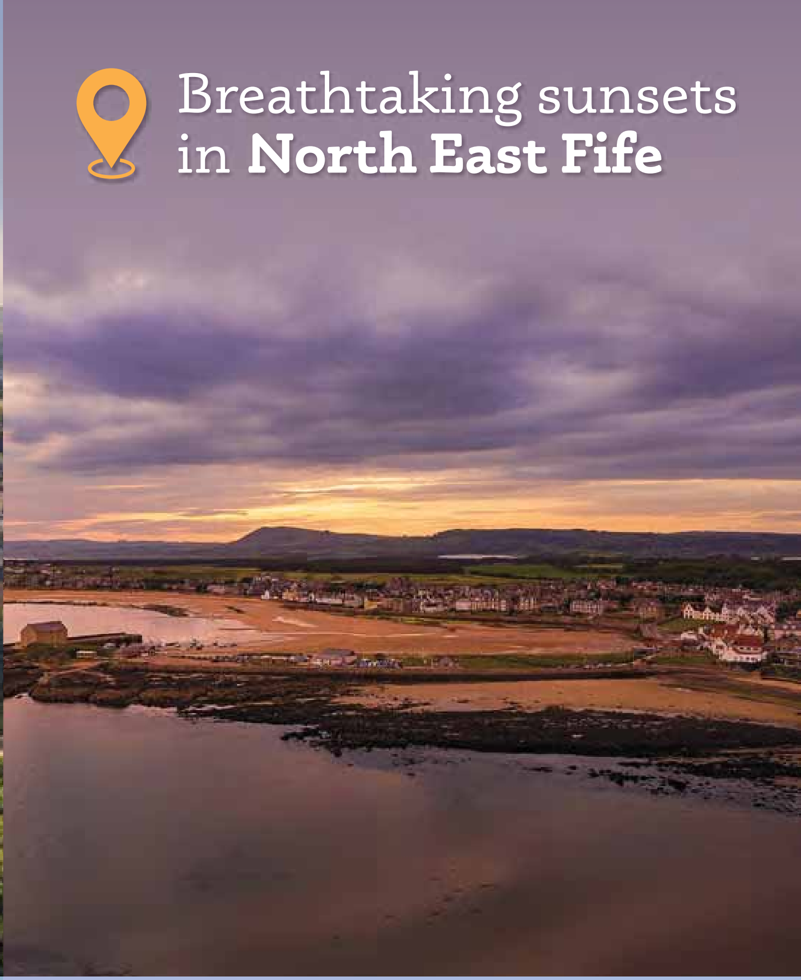
Grab a post-walk ice cream or snack at the Mirador Café at Elie Holiday Park.

Pictures: ALAMY

A day out in Scotland’s **newest city**



Breathtaking sunsets in **North East Fife**



Take a trip to the **home of golf**

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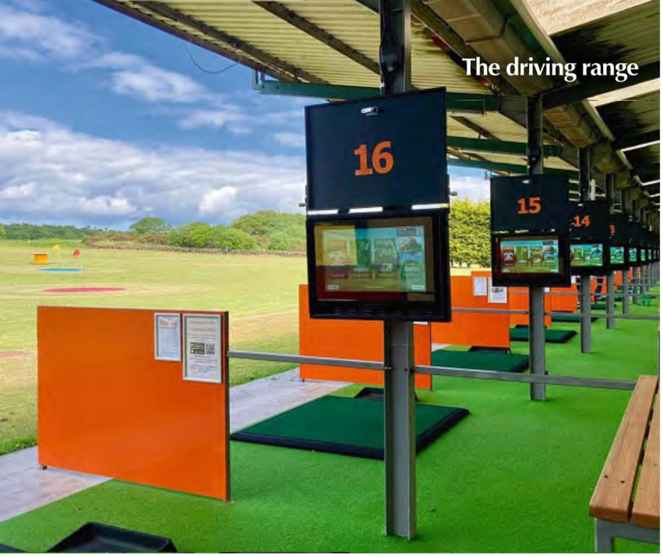

The driving range

Time For Tee

Try your hand at a variety of golf-based games and more at Cluny Activities

ST ANDREWS might lay claim to being the home of golf, but another Fife venue is pushing the game's boundaries in different directions.

At Cluny Activities, visitors can test their skills at foot golf – kicking a football around a nine or 18-hole course.

Or how about disc golf? That's tossing a flying disc into a basket, again over nine or 18 holes.

Traditionalists will be pleased to hear there's a nine-hole regular golf course, too. Ideal for beginners, it's set in rolling countryside beside the River Ore, near Kirkcaldy, and is open seven days a week.

There's also a golf shop and a driving range, where visitors can play for fun or practise their skills.

It's a popular activity for team-building and group outings, too.

Golf is only part of the picture here, though.

The family-run business started out as Cluny Clays and, for a while, clay pigeon shooting was a side interest for the Shedden family, while they farmed the land.

Over time the range of activities grew and in 2003 the cows and agricultural equipment were sold so the family could focus on running a first-class visitor attraction.

Clay shooting experiences are still part of the package, and visitors can try to hit the bullseye with an air rifle. There are also cricket nets, available for hire to individual players, coaches and clubs.

And the centre proudly proclaims itself as Fife's only Segway venue, offering instruction and safety gear for taster sessions or exciting hour-long tours around the estate.

There's also a clubhouse – serving home-baking, snacks, coffee and alcohol – making it a great spot for corporate events, stag and hen parties and active families looking for a place to blow off steam in a safe environment. »

Don't Miss...

Indulge your inner Robin Hood and try your hand at archery.

CONTACT

☎ 01592 720374
✉ enquiries@clunyactivities.co.uk
www.clunyactivities.co.uk

When...

Open seven days a week. Check age restrictions on activities.

How Much...

Prices vary depending on activities.

Where...

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Kirkcaldy,
Fife, KY2 6QU.

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Hello, Deer!

Come and meet the animals for a fun day out at the flourishing Scottish Deer Centre

Some of the deer on-site

When...

Open 10am to 5pm every day except Christmas Day and January 1.

How Much...

Adult £12.50, Concession £10, Child £8.50. Family of four, £38. Parking is free, with tours and demonstrations included in admission price.

Where...

Bow of Fife, Cupar, KY15 4NQ.

CONTACT

☎ 01337 810391
hello@deercentre.com
scottishdeercentre.co.uk

TO most people, *We Bought A Zoo* is the title of a wholesome family film from 2011.

For David Hamilton, however, it's been the realisation of a lifelong dream.

The Fife businessman grew up just along the road from the Scottish Deer Centre, near Cupar, and visited regularly when he was a boy. So when the attraction went into administration a couple of years ago, he and friend Gavin Findlay stepped in to rescue it and transform it into something future generations would look back on with as much fondness.

The pair purchased the 22-hectare (55 acres) park in 2021 and have invested millions in upgrading the facilities and introducing new attractions.

The centre is now home to 12 species of deer, as well as wolves, European brown bears, Asian short-claw otters, northern lynx and Scottish wildcats.

It also features the Raptor World birds of prey area, which offers handling experiences and public demonstrations.

Last year, David and the team even welcomed a retired RAF Buccaneer jet to the site. It's now one of their most popular displays.

The big new attraction for this year is a dino dig area, where budding palaeontologists can search for fossils.

Throw in a treetop walk, witches' wood, go-kart track, play areas, a café and gift shop, and you have the makings of an excellent family day out.

The Scottish Deer Centre isn't just a business for David, whose background is in computers. It has always been a huge part of his life and he wants visitors to leave – and return – with as much love for the place as he has.

"If people haven't been for a few years I think they'll be surprised to see how much it's changed," he says.

"We just want to keep adding new things and improving all the time." »

Don't Miss...

The exciting tractor trailer rides in July and August, which cost an extra £3.50 per person.

RANKEILOUR PARK
SCOTTISH DEER CENTRE

The Scottish Deer Centre

All that's visible above ground

Open Secret

Far from its days as a hidden nuclear command post, this Cold War bunker is a top tourist draw

FROM the outside, it looks like any of the other unassuming farms scattered across the East Neuk. But then, that's the whole point.

For 30 metres (100 feet) beneath the farmhouse at Troywood, near Anstruther, is the Cold War bunker where Scotland's top brass would have run what was left of the country in the event of a nuclear war.

It contained everything officials and military chiefs believed they needed in order to safeguard and provide for the surviving civilian population.

Incredibly, it was still operational until the early 1990s, when the end of the Cold War rendered it obsolete.

In the three decades since it was decommissioned, it has been transformed from one of the Fife countryside's best-kept secrets to one of Scotland's most popular – and unusual – tourist attractions.

Before it was reborn as Scotland's Secret Bunker – now a VisitScotland four-star museum – the site was known to a select few as RAF Troywood.

It was constructed in the early 1950s in response to the very real threat of a nuclear war with the USSR.

Initially it operated as a radar station and listening post, one of a chain of so-called Rotor stations which sprang up along the coastline after the Second World War.

These were built to a standard plan with an entrance "bungalow" above, although Troywood was given a number of distinct touches to help it blend in with its East Neuk surroundings, including the red roof tiles common to the surrounding fishing villages.

The station's original purpose was to detect Russian bombers and alert RAF crews to intercept them.

Its location, on a low hill overlooking the gentle slope of farmland towards the North Sea, gave it the perfect vantage point.

By the end of the 1950s it was no longer needed as a listening station and it briefly became a headquarters for the regional civil defence corps, who were again focused on the response to a potential nuclear strike.

> *"For those who lived through the Cold War, it's an insight into what might have been"*

VISUAL DISPLAY
GROUND BURST

Fascinating displays reveal bunker life

An underground dormitory

When...
Open daily, 10am to 5pm.

How Much...
Adult £14.95, Child £10.95.
Family tickets, concessions
and group rates available.

Where...
Crown Buildings,
Troywood, Near
St Andrews, Fife,
KY16 8QH.

Its function stepped up a gear in the 1970s when it was designated a regional nuclear command control centre and the bunker was expanded to the size of two football pitches, one on top of the other.

Had the bomb dropped, ministers of state, the health secretary, members of the emergency services, MPs, council officials and senior figures in the military would all have come here to live and work.

Beneath "the farmhouse" and lying beyond the three-tonne, hermetically-sealed blast-proof door, leading on to a 45-metre (150 feet) long tunnel, there were six dormitories, with space for 300 people, plus the secretary of state's own suite and separate living quarters for senior staff.

In addition to the command centre, radar room and armoury, it boasted a chapel, which had its own resident clergy throughout the Cold War.

There was even a broadcasting studio, where BBC staff would have transmitted emergency broadcasts.

It's thought the bunker residents would have had sufficient provisions – a tasty feast of Spam, beans and Smash – to survive underground for several months.

Nowadays, two cinemas show archive footage from Hiroshima, in Japan, and a CND room details efforts by the Scottish Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament to rid Scotland of the Trident missile system.

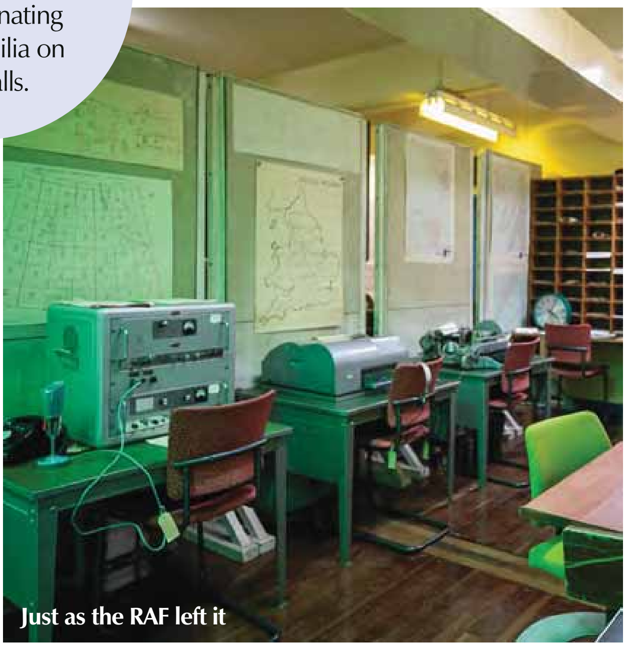
But much of the museum is as the RAF left it in the 1990s and its former uses are brought back to life through a collection of displays – featuring weapons, original documents and military vehicles.

It's a fascinating, if at times sobering, experience for visitors of all ages. And for those who lived through the Cold War and the threat of nuclear devastation, it provides a chilling insight into what might have been.

Wheelchairs are available on each floor, though there are no lifts – visitors will have to be able to manage the 16 stairs between the reception area and the entrance to the bunker itself. »

Don't Miss...
The former mess is now a café for visitors, with fascinating memorabilia on the walls.

CONTACT
☎ 01333 310301
✉ mod@secretbunker.co.uk
secretbunker.co.uk


Just as the RAF left it

Pictures: ALAMY

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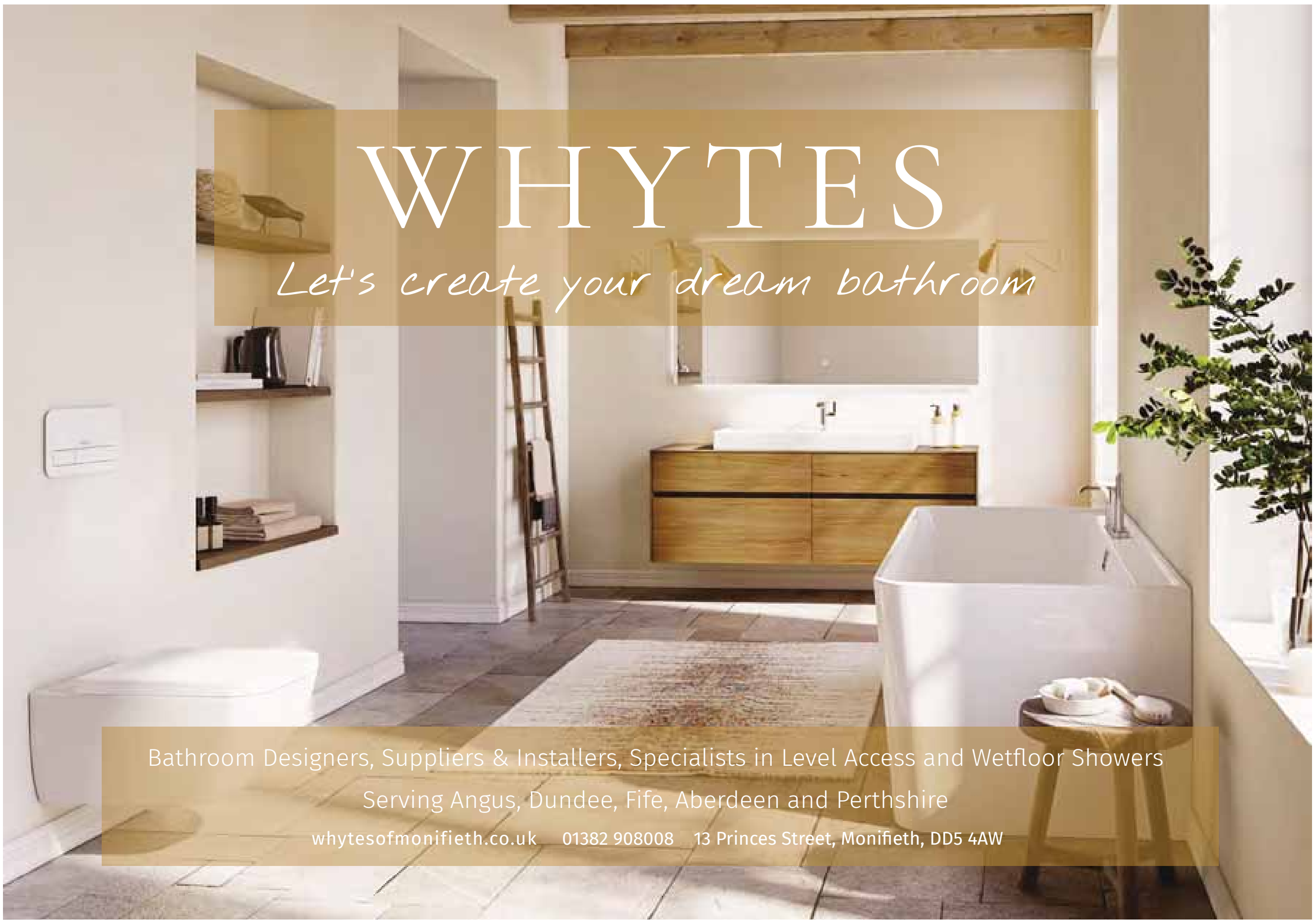

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Pictures: ALAMY

Jim Crumley, Scotland's leading wildlife author,

Beyond The Woods

Over dyke, across burn and through the pines, following the foray of a curious young badger into the wider world is a profound experience

A MID-MAY evening, uncomfortably perched on the trunk of a fallen willow – I was hoping for badger cubs.

I was sustained by walk-on appearances from roebuck, robin, roding woodcock – alternating otter squeak and frog croak, how do you get a voice like that? – and noises from a nearby cuckoo.

But, by 10 o'clock, not a badger in sight. It happens.

Then a new noise from the bank above the sett, a scuffle by a wire fence between woodland and field – a miniature badger face towed its squirming body under the bottom strand. Then there was a crumbling drystane dyke and, beyond, a steep bank above a tiny hill burn.

The cub made it to the decrepit crown of the dilapidated dyke, then lost it when all four feet were briefly on the same stone.

The stone moved, bounced down on to the bank. The cub rolled after it, out of control, and into the burn where it stood and shook itself, returned to the bank, headed downstream as if nothing at all had happened.

With badger cubs, the curiosity of the mustelid is there from the start, likewise the courage, likewise the robust response to life and its obstacles.

It showed no desire to return to the sett, so where? In wellies and overtrousers I took to the burn and walked a few yards behind, reasonably confident that

»

writes exclusively for you every month...

“With badger cubs, the curiosity and courage of the mustelid is there from the start”

Badger cubs

Badger cubs foraging on a fallen tree

> “A sense of the ridiculous began to creep in”

the sound of the burn was in my favour and my clothes were woodland-coloured. The wind was anyone’s guess among so many big trees and small clearings.

A low rise in the ground hid the cub for a few seconds. When I reached the crest it was on the other side of the burn. A pool where it had crossed was deep enough to have demanded a yard of swimming. An obvious path through the grass and well-scratched lichen on rock suggested a regular crossing point for many badgers.

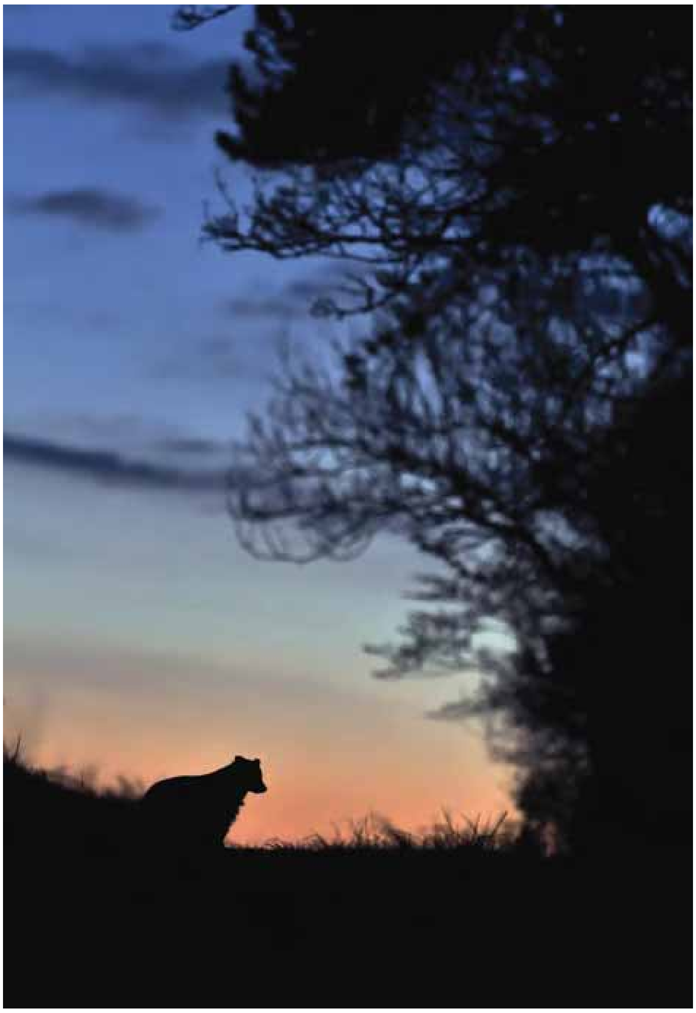
A delicious meal

Beyond the burn and another dyke was a stand of tall pines and, beyond them, a glimpse of the still bright western sky, a clearing and – if my guess was right – the cub’s destination. A badger’s favourite food is earthworms – I suspected the cub was navigating with its nose.

A sense of the ridiculous began to creep into the evening. I am six feet tall and solidly built. I was attempting to remain inconspicuous to a badger cub which was about 20 inches long and which might or might not have known where it was going.

It paused at the top of the bank, put its nose to the wind. Such a pause was understandable. Consider its life thus far. There were the first dark underground weeks, then stumblings around the sett followed by the first forays around the closed-in tree-shadowed limits of the clearing that accommodated much of the sett.

Then there was a choice between the easy woodland at the far side of the sett, or the first crossing of the burn



Far left: A badger cub at sunset

Left: Badger prints

Below: A nosy lamb

and its two treacherous dykes. This might well have been that first crossing.

Badgers do not rely primarily on sight – scent and hearing are what works for them. But surely the first sight of the landscape beyond that bank above the burn must have widened the eyes of the mite. Suddenly the land was wide open and dipping into what must have looked like an endless downhill sprawl.

The grass was short, rough pasture but waist-high on the cub. The sky blazed with the aftermath of sunset and accommodated the dense black silhouette of a mountain.

DID YOU KNOW?

Badgers can eat several hundred earthworms in a night! They are also one of the only predators of hedgehogs – their thick skin and long claws help them get past the spines. Fruit features in their diets, too, and they are fond of pears, apples, plums and elderberries.

And perhaps the badger cub was feeling for the first time the brush of an unhindered, sweet-scented wind. It would be a soulless beast – and in my mind at least, a badger is not one of these – that was not impressed.

And then, from the same low-slung viewpoint, what might a badger cub make of its first sheep?

The cub was 20 yards ahead, stopping often to sniff, hugging the edge of the field just in case, as though the tumbling, bright green spaces were too daunting. A lamb spotted it, bounced over bravely, intrigued by what could have been its first ever badger cub. It stopped 10 feet short of the cub, which appeared not to have noticed it.

The lamb advanced, stopped, spoke. The cub noticed then and, in a gesture which doubtless established unambiguously the relationship between badger and sheep for as long as it mattered to those two creatures in particular, it spun round and hissed. The lamb turned and ran to the sanctuary of its mother's udder.

The cub was about to make another discovery, one which would surely confer on the field the status of Valhalla. A single scoop of a front foot into the soft earth and it tapped into a lifetime's supply of earthworms.

As far as I could tell from my discreet pursuit in and out of the tree-lined edge of the field, it ate four or five » in the next 50 yards, but those same 50 yards took at least 10 minutes to explore. A badger cub feeding on worms is not, it turns out, either a swift or a spectacular process.

But then something somewhere across the field, in the last of the light, triggered a considered assessment in that solitary badger cub of its vulnerability. I had seen nothing, heard nothing to account for it, but that tiny hunter-wanderer turned tail and ran.

Suddenly the shuffling creature had legs, its every hair seemed to stand on end and, as it ran, no part of it seemed in contact with the ground. As well as worms, the cub had just tasted fear.

It swerved into the trees, half ran and half rolled down the bank, almost bounced over the first dyke, thrashed through the burn, stopped long enough to shake itself again, made a more careful crossing of the second dyke and disappeared into the sett clearing. And that was both a swift and a spectacular process.

But now I wanted an explanation. I opted for stillness. I waited, relishing the cool air and the view of the cloud-smouldering cone of the mountain in the distance.

Then, in the highest corner of the field, something stirred and the quietest wings of the woodland edge spirited through the night air. At once the cub's discomfort was explained. It had just seen its first ghost, the eerily twilit silence of Old Moon Face – a barn owl.

The cub would not know yet that the barn owl is a mouser, that it already knows all badgers, whatever their size, are too ferocious a presence to tangle with.

The cub would learn that soon enough. Learn, too, that there was nothing to fear in the wild wood, nothing but the tall, two-legged creature that lays traps and poisons and carries guns and blames the badger for bovine TB and walks on the badger's roof and sends dogs into the sett and sours badger paths with its scent.

The badger shares with the barn owl a reluctance to be seen in daylight – both are shadow creatures with white masks, allies in that unchancy terrain where the trees meet the fields.

I was hoping for cubs. I got more than I hoped for. Ⓢ

FASCINATING FACTS

Badgers typically weigh 10-12kg, with a body length of around 90cm – they're the UK's biggest land predator.

Their prints are distinctive – they have kidney-shaped pads, five upward-pointing toes and long claws.

Badgers are a wood's ruling clan, often occupying the same sett for generations.

A cub inside a hollow log

Pictures: LAURIE CAMPBELL

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The House Of Plenty

This decaying Scottish stately home was rescued by a prince and has been transformed into a bustling hub of education and opportunity

by PAUL FISHER COCKBURN

EVERYONE, it seems, has a story to tell about Dumfries House – and for Jacqueline Farrell, who grew up within two miles of the Ayrshire estate, it's a story of artistic inspiration and change.

Growing up, the estate was a mysterious place.

"I was luckier than most in that my grandfather had a connection to the house, he looked after the TV sets," she says. "He managed the local shop, so he was allowed to maintain Lady Eileen's TV, and we got to stand on the front steps – that was quite exciting!

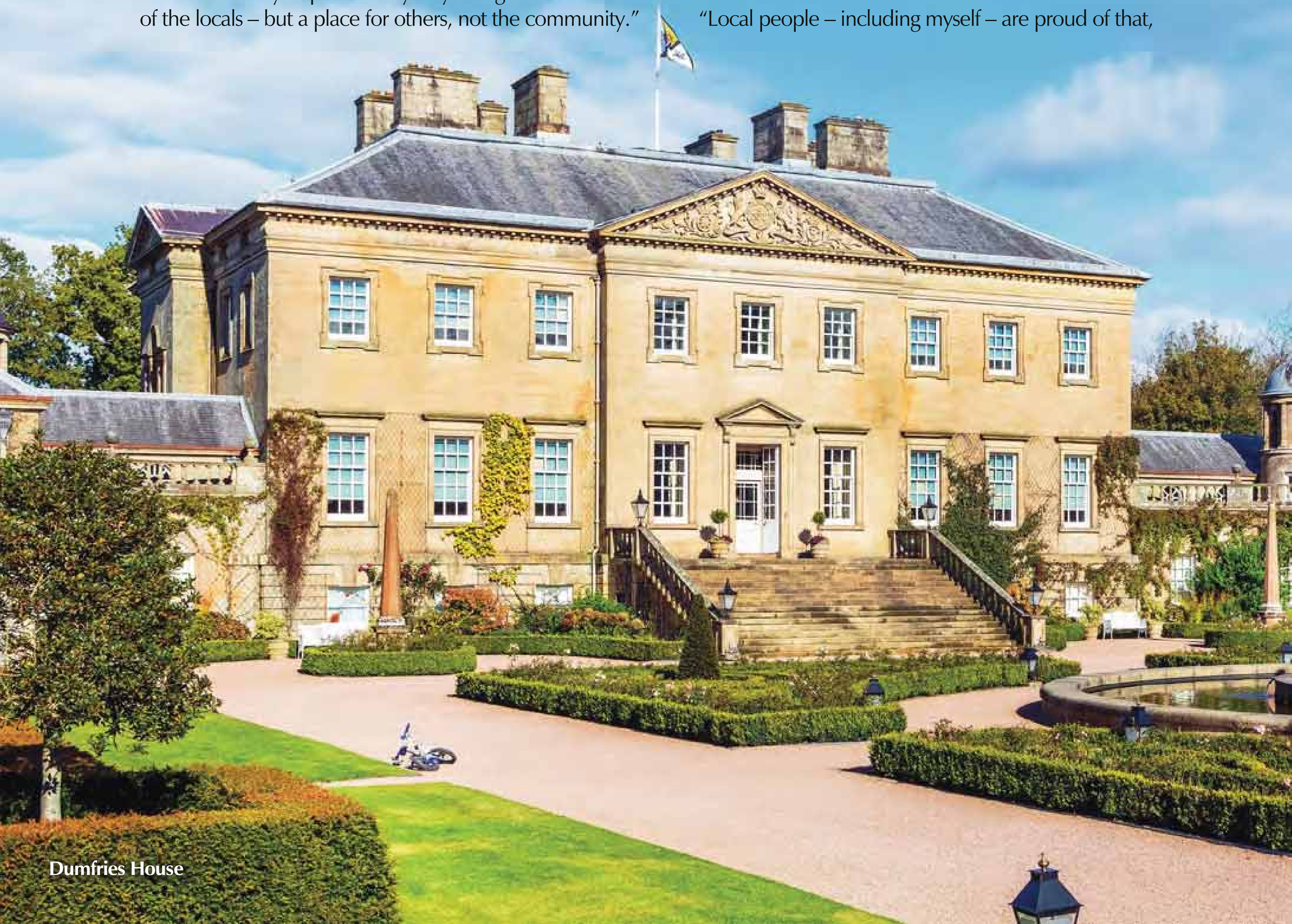
"It was always a place of mystery and glamour to most of the locals – but a place for others, not the community."

This was back in the day when the slowly decaying property of the Crichton-Stuart family, and home – until her death in 1993 – of the Dowager Marchioness of Bute, Lady Eileen, was not particularly welcoming to visitors.

That's all changed. Now owned by educational charity The Prince's Foundation, the restored house and estate are arguably something unique.

"It's not a stately home, it's not a garden, it's not a college or a school – it's all of those things," says Jacqueline, who is now education director for The Prince's Foundation.

"Local people – including myself – are proud of that,



Above: Lady Eileen, Dowager Marchioness of Bute

Left: Jacqueline Farrell with Camilla, the Queen Consort

> *“It was always a place of mystery and glamour”*

and proud to see the success it’s brought to the area – the proof of the concept is that it’s regenerating the local community,” she says.

“When you give people pride in their assets and their area, it just begins to change the culture.”

From being one of Scotland’s most overlooked hidden treasures – an 18th-century Palladian country house, with so much of its original furniture that the contents were once thought to be worth as much as the building itself – the estate has become a self-supporting operation that’s been making real changes to people’s lives since it was bought from its former owners in 2007.

Just one example is Stuart Banks. Originally from Kilmarnock, he dropped out of school following a family tragedy and, lacking qualifications, found it extremely difficult to find and hold on to a job.

“I had no sort of grasp on what I wanted to do with my life,” he says. “I never found a passion for anything. I spent most of my life unemployed, not doing much.”

His local job centre eventually suggested that Stuart, »

DID YOU KNOW?

The Prince’s Foundation offers a diverse range of innovative and inspiring education and training programmes for people of all ages and backgrounds – from traditional arts and heritage crafts skills to design, science, engineering, horticulture, wellbeing and hospitality.

Dumfries House

King Charles looks on

Food fit for a king

then aged 23, try a hospitality course at Dumfries House. "You would do a little bit in the kitchen, a little bit front-of-house," he says. "It was a five-week course. After three weeks I started to feel a bit hopeful they might employ me if I just went for it.

"At the end of the five-week course, I had three job offers – one from Dumfries House, one from a local hotel where I'd gone on placement and one other. Naturally, I took the Dumfries House job."

It started Stuart on his professional journey. "It was an events assistant role, working up at the main house, and in my first week on the job I met the Duke of Rothesay – now King Charles III – so that was a bit of a shock to the system! Just over a month into the job I was down at Buckingham Palace serving at his 65th birthday."

Stuart is now head butler at Dumfries House, in charge of a team that looks after both the commercial hospitality operations of the estate – the popular café and restaurant, the numerous private dinners and weddings hosted there – and the personal needs of His Majesty whenever he visits.

"During my first two years in the job I was regularly going down to various royal households to work alongside His Majesty's butlers, who had been doing it for years," he says.

"Less than a year from starting, I was promoted to butler at Dumfries House, where I'd be looking after the then Duke of Rothesay when he came to the house. Within a year I was butler to the now king."

Stuart is pleased that, when he mentions his place of work, many people have stories to tell – of relatives who have worked or studied there, or of visits to the house or grounds. "A common remark is, 'We saw the prince up there.' You wouldn't believe the number of people who have stopped and spoken with him," he says.

The most rewarding part of Stuart's job now is helping mentor future members of the hospitality sector.

"Quite recently I've been doing a lot more talks at various schools, championing hospitality as a career," he says. "A lot of the students we have are like myself, they've come from long-term unemployment.

FASCINATING FACTS

Dumfries House was a family home from 1760 until 1993, when Lady Eileen, Dowager Marchioness of Bute, passed away.

A consortium led by the king, at the time the Prince of Wales, purchased the house and its contents in 2007 – saving one of the most important collections of Georgian Scottish and English furniture.

Visitors can explore the stunning 809 hectare (2000 acres) estate 365 days a year, with free entry and parking.

> *"He will always be keen to see what we do"*

"It's about encouraging them to change their outlook on life, learn new skills, and find something that is a building block to begin their working life."

As a creative designer, Jacqueline Farrell took much of her inspiration from the grounds of Dumfries House – the patterns of the seasons and the colours and textures of nature which she used in her fashion work. She came to The Prince's Foundation in 2014 to help establish a textile training programme.

"East Ayrshire, and Ayrshire in general, has a brilliant textile heritage," she says. "To be able to give a little back to the area and use my expertise as an educationalist and design practitioner was a dream come true.

"Future Textiles, as the programme is called, has gone from strength to strength – we're now working with some of the biggest fashion brands in the world."

One of the programme's graduates is Nicole Christie, whose sustainable fashion brand Ellipsis saw her named Scottish Fashion Designer of the Year in February.

Cumnock

"I was in the first cohort of the Modern Artisan Programme," Nicole says. "What I've learnt through that programme has shaped my business as it is today. I really don't know what Ellipsis would be without it."

For Jacqueline, the impact on nearby Cumnock is as important as tales of individual success.

"Scotland is now the home of luxury textiles. Our manufacturing partners are working with Hermès, Prada, Chanel – and most Scottish people probably don't even realise that. To put Cumnock at the heart of some of the engagement with those brands and to give people the opportunity to work with them, it's just phenomenal.

"Cumnock was kind of neglected – it wasn't on a tourist route, it had lost its manufacturing industry. But it's is now starting to regenerate. You can see the town centre perking right up. There's lots of investment in the local hotels and we've even got an organic food shop!"

Will the Duke of Rothesay's ascension to the throne mean changes for The Prince's Foundation?

"Some of our work, as The Prince's Foundation, was established 30 years ago – we are embedded and imbued with his vision and philosophy," says Jacqueline. "It's in our DNA. He will always be keen to see what we do and how we grow as an organisation."

Stuart Banks agrees, and says, "I can't speak for him, but I've seen at first hand, for many years, just how passionate he is about this project."

The royal seal of approval

Pictures: ALAMY, REX/SHUTTERSTOCK

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Westminster Abbey

The Great Eight

As King Charles III is crowned, we look at his strong links to Scotland

by CRAIG HORNE

THE coronation of King Charles III takes place this month, on Saturday, May 6, at Westminster Abbey in London.

He will be crowned alongside Camilla, the Queen Consort, in a ceremony set to be conducted by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby.

Here, we celebrate eight of Charles's strongest links to Scotland.

From the Highland school and island croft that helped shape him, the children's book that the land inspired in him and the 18th-century homes he loves, to the nobles that have gone before, the titles he passes down and the sacred object that is set to take pride of place at his coronation ceremony.

Brandy For The Boy Prince

Charles attended the independent boarding school Gordonstoun, near Elgin, from 1962-67. He was the first Prince of Wales to be educated at a school rather than by private tutors. His coronation makes Gordonstoun the first senior school to educate a British monarch. Young Charles incurred the wrath of the school's head teacher when he supped a bottle of cherry brandy at a hotel on the Isle of Lewis in 1963. He was both underage and, as a Gordonstoun boy, forbidden from drinking alcohol. Charles gained five O-levels in English language, English literature, history, Latin and French, along with two A-levels in history and French. »

Dumfries House

Saving The Chippendales

In 2007, Charles stepped in to save Dumfries House, an 18th-century mansion near Cumnock, Ayrshire. It was about to be sold to cover the death duties of its owner, the Marquess of Bute. Charles, Duke of Rothesay, used £20 million of his own charitable foundation's money and personally brokered a £45m deal to secure the opulent property and its collection of Chippendale furniture. After initially being run by a bespoke trust, Charles moved its stewardship to his Prince's Foundation in 2018. The attraction now provides training and employment opportunities in a region adversely affected by the demise of coal mining.

The Potato Prince

In 1987, the then Prince of Wales enjoyed a week living incognito as a crofter on Berneray in the Outer Hebrides. He stayed with Donald Alex MacKillop, known as Splash, and his wife Gloria, who taught him the basics. The royal rolled up his sleeves to plant and lift potatoes, cut peat, dip sheep and plant trees. He returned to in 1991 to make the TV documentary *A Prince Among Islands*, and in 1999 to open the £7m causeway linking the island to North Uist. "People like him are very hard to replace," Charles said upon Mr MacKillop's death in 2009.

Berneray

Glamis Castle

Scotland In The Blood

King Charles III's ties with Scotland are in his DNA. He is a direct descendent of the Stewart king James VI and I through his grandfather King George VI. Charles can also trace his lineage through generations of Scottish nobility back to Sir John Lyon, who obtained Glamis Castle upon his marriage to Johanna, daughter of King Robert II. The Angus castle was the ancestral home of Charles's grandmother, the late Queen Mother, as well as being the birthplace of the king's late aunt, Princess Margaret, who was the first royal baby to be born in Scotland since 1600.

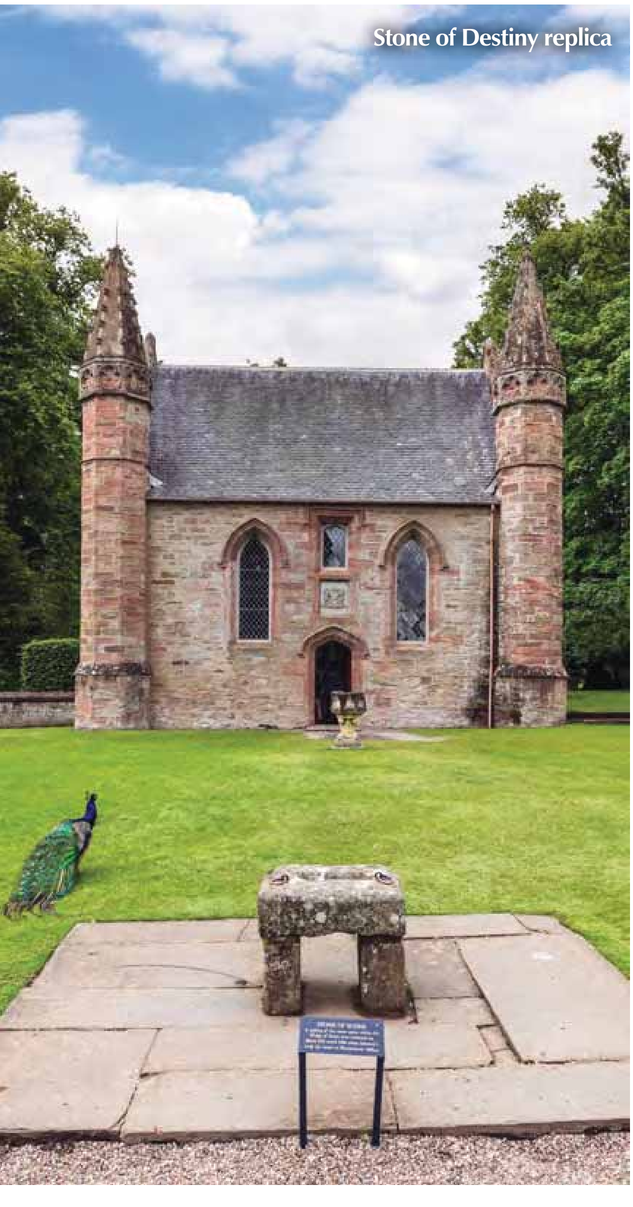
Estate Of Bliss

Birkhall is the neighbouring estate to Balmoral. Charles inherited the 18th-century house, with its 2428 hectares (6000 acres) of grounds, after the death of the Queen Mother in 2002. The Duke of Rothesay went down on one knee there, on a grey and windswept day in January 2005, when he proposed to Camilla. Such is the couple's affection for the place, they even honeymooned there. More recently, it was where Charles and Camilla spent the first Covid-19 lockdown of 2020. The Queen Consort's Jack Russells, Beth and Bluebell – both of whom were rescues from Battersea Dogs & Cats Home – join them there whenever they stay. »

With the late Queen at Birkhall

Stone And Throne

The Stone of Destiny will feature in Charles's coronation as it did when his mother, Queen Elizabeth II, ascended to the throne. It will then be returned to Edinburgh Castle. The Stone of Scone, as it is also known, was the inauguration seat of Scottish kings until Edward I seized it in 1296 and took it to Westminster Abbey. In 1950, a daring group of Scottish students decided to take it back. It was later discovered in Arbroath Abbey and was ultimately returned to Scotland in 1996. In 2020, the then First Minister Nicola Sturgeon announced plans to relocate the stone to Perth.


Stone of Destiny replica

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A Wealth Of Titles

When the late Queen ascended the throne in 1952, and Charles became heir, he inherited a wealth of titles. The four-year-old became the Duke of Rothesay, Earl of Carrick, Baron of Renfrew, Lord of the Isles and Prince and Great Steward of Scotland. As heir, he was best known as the Prince of Wales – a title the Queen gave him later – but in Scotland, he was known as the Duke of Rothesay. These titles now pass to Prince William. It is believed the Duke of Edinburgh title, which had remained vacant since Prince Philip died in 2021, will pass to Prince Edward.

Once Upon A Time . . .

Charles once spun a story he used to tell his brothers Andrew and Edward into a children's book. *The Old Man Of Lochnagar* tells of a loveable hermit who roams the hills and lochs around Balmoral, interacting with the birds and fish, and the stranger, secret inhabitants of the area. The book, illustrated by Sir Hugh Casson, was published in 1980 in aid of The Prince's Trust. The BBC turned it into a short animated film, with Robbie Coltrane voicing the eponymous hero and Prince Charles narrating. It has also enjoyed incarnations as musical stage play and ballet. Ⓢ

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Charles Simpson
from the studio
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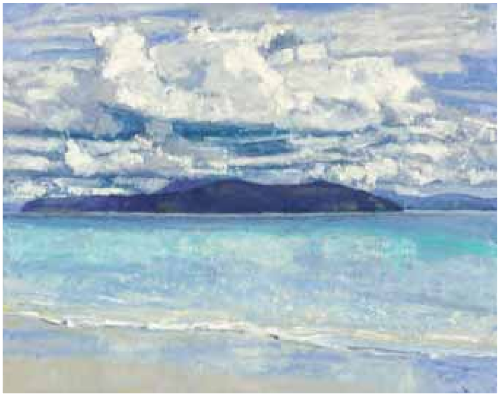

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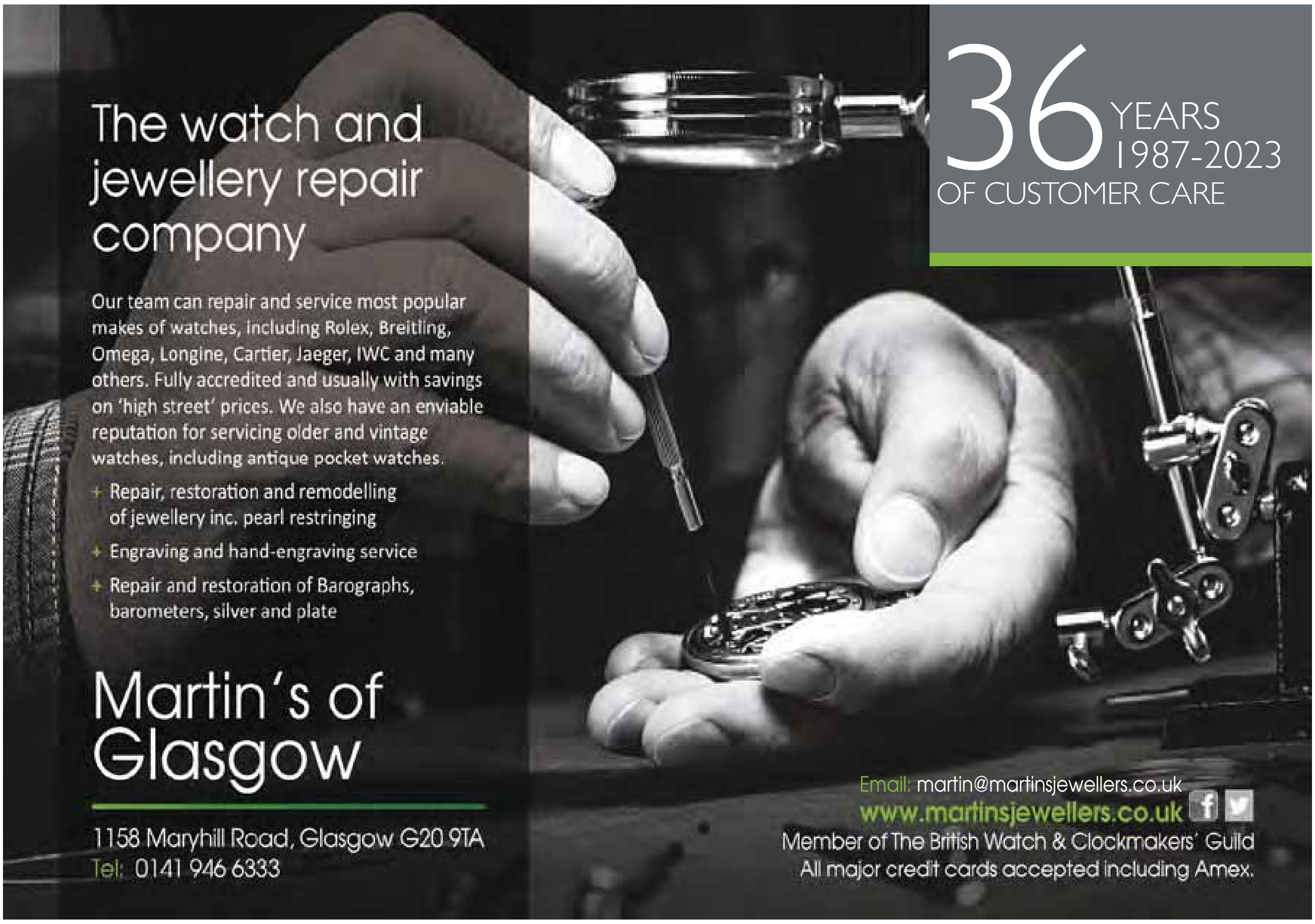
Charles Simpson has been a full time painter since 1999 with regular solo exhibitions in Edinburgh and London.



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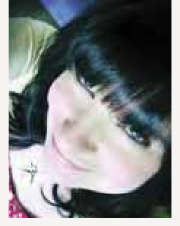

A Family Affair

Knockengorroch festival celebrates 25 years of connection to the land

WHAT links French dubstep, Palestinian jazz, a hamster's final resting place, a "real-life" unicorn and the Scottish Traditional Music Hall of Fame's Old Blind Dogs?

Well, for one weekend a year it's a few acres in south-west Scotland – home, for the past 25 years, to Knockengorroch.

Kicking off in 1998 as the Ceilidh Gall Gallowa' Festival, Knockengorroch was founded by local residents Liz and Simon Holmes – conceived as a celebration of Celtic roots music and the lands and the people that created that music.

Now Scotland's longest-running greenfield festival and a community interest company, Knockengorroch remains a family affair – with producer Katch Holmes joining her parents and brother to deliver an annual event that retains its distinct character in an increasingly crowded festival landscape.

"I remember reading a magazine article about how to start your own festival – it said to make sure it's close to a road so people can get to it, and make sure your name is easy to pronounce," Katch says. "Well, we didn't do any of that – but, 25 years later, we're still here."

Holmes family

That longevity, she says, is partly because Knockengorroch doesn't seek to follow trends, instead booking acts that are likely to appeal to "people who are curious and open-minded and willing to try new things". It's also, partly, a little bit of magic.

"You have to drive a few miles into the hills to get to Knockengorroch – and I think that process, that journey of getting there, puts you into another time and a place, that's a little bit away from everyday life for most people," she says.

"It's the piece of land where I grew up, a place I feel personally very attached to and connected with, but also a strong sense of responsibility towards.

"And there's now a community of people that love that piece of land just as much as my family does, and

Pictures: JOHN FARRELL, S POWERS

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Left: Knockengorroch

I think that's one of the things that keeps people coming back," Katch says.

Liz and Simon, both artists, moved to the Carsphairn Hills of Kirkcudbrightshire from London in the 1970s, in search of a different way of life.

They grew food, reared animals, made art and raised two children – and then, in the late 1990s, welcomed an international hippy Rainbow Gathering to the land, and got a feel for how the site could facilitate a community of like-minded people.

As fans of roots, folk and world music – like that being showcased by the then-fledgling Celtic Connections festival in Glasgow – the couple decided to ask some bands to play the site the following year.

Beginning with Old Blind Dogs and "a couple of hundred people in a field", the festival now welcomes 3000 people a year across eight stages and venues.

Some things haven't changed, though. Old Blind Dogs, who played that first festival, are back on the bill for the 25th anniversary weekend, as are Glasgow dubstep collective Mungo's Hi Fi – who feel so at home at Knockengorroch that one of the group's family hamster, Doug, is buried at the site.

> *"It's the land where I grew up, a place I feel very attached to"*

And while the next 25 years will undoubtedly further transform Knockengorroch, there will still be a place in that for what Jonny Hardie of Old Blind Dogs describes as "a truly enduring world music event" – one whose people-centric, land-first mission is a beacon to a world in which sustainability messages can no longer be ignored.

"When you live in a rural place, you notice aspects of change in the environment around you much quicker, because you're living in among it – so biodiversity has always been one of the main tenets of our approach," says Katch.

"It's about the connection to land, and for festivalgoers – particularly those from the cities – to get the chance to feel like they're a part of that land and that they have a responsibility for what happens to it. I feel like that's one of the only things that is really going to save us."

Knockengorroch 2023 takes place from May 25-28.

On Our Radar…

Post Coal Prom Queen

Post Coal Prom Queen
The Scottish duo marks the release of *Music For First Contact* with an album launch spectacular at Glasgow's Old Hairdressers on May 4.

Withered Hand
Edinburgh-based songwriter Dan Willson surprise-released new album *How To Love* on Valentine's Day. It's now out on vinyl from Reveal Records.

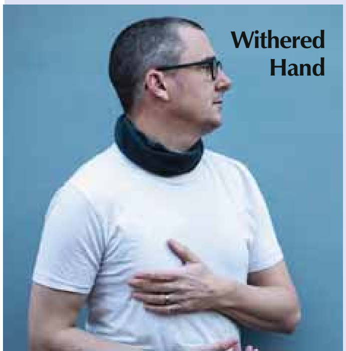
Hairband
Featuring current and former members of bands such as Spinning Coin, Breakfast Muff, The Yawns and Lush Purr, the Glasgow-Berlin "underground supergroup" have released debut *Under The Plow*.

Inkfields
Edinburgh-based songwriter Samuel James-Griffiths describes his second album *The Third Side Of The Coin* as "composed from my heart".

Comfort
Channelling anti-capitalist, queer-positive rage into hip hop-inspired 21st-century punk, the Glasgow sibling duo release *What's Bad Enough?* on May 5.

Rebecca Hill & Charlie Stewart
The harp and fiddle duo – who met while studying at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland – have just released their debut album *Thawcrook*.

The Road To The Great Escape
Taking place across Glasgow – at King Tut's, Nice N Sleazy, G2 and The Garage Attic Bar – on May 6, featuring Scots acts like Katie Gregson-MacLeod, The Joy Hotel and Terra Kin.



Withered Hand

The Wilderness Years

James Crawford's latest book reveals some of the fascinating historic places in Scotland that nature has reclaimed over time

by DAWN GEDDES

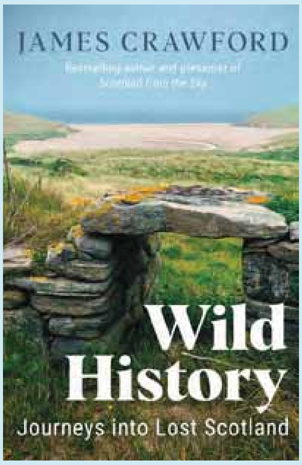
AWARD-WINNING writer and broadcaster James Crawford has enjoyed an extraordinary career.

The Shetland-born author, who presents the BBC One documentary series *Scotland From The Sky*, has written eight non-fiction titles – including the critically-acclaimed *The Edge Of The Plain – How Borders Make And Break Our World*.

In his latest book, *Wild History – Journeys Into Lost Scotland*, James examines historic locations which have been reclaimed by nature.

On his beginnings as a writer, James says, "I knew I wanted to be a writer from the age of six, but I ended up pursuing a law degree.

"Very quickly, I realised I wasn't going to be a lawyer. I found it incredibly boring. When it came to my honours subjects, I found myself writing non-fiction essays on really interesting topics. I think in many ways that shaped the writing career I've gone on to have."


JAMES CRAWFORD
Bestselling author and presenter of Scotland From the Sky
Wild History
Journeys into Lost Scotland

James' latest book

After university, James spent eight years in London as a literary agent. When he came back to Scotland he worked for and researched Scotland's National Collection of architecture and archaeology.

"When I took up the position, the archive had just turned 100 and was looking for someone to spend time working out how to tell its story, and the stories that it contained, to the public," he says. "I found myself gravitating towards their aerial photography collections and that led to me writing my first non-fiction title on the subject."

While he was working in the archive, James had the idea of telling the stories of buildings in biography form, as if they were people.

This went on to become his first major non-fiction book *Fallen Glory – The Lives And Deaths Of The World's Greatest Lost Buildings*.

After a radio interview, James was approached about opportunities at the BBC, which resulted in him writing

A wrecked midget submarine in Aberlady Bay, East Lothian

and presenting the TV programme *Scotland From The Sky* – catapulting him into an entirely different medium.

"In the beginning, you really have no idea if you can do it or not!" he says. "They wanted to make a pilot, so I wrote the script and filmed it – not knowing whether I'd written the right sort of thing. Thankfully, I had.

"I really like having control over the words as a presenter. Writing for television is very collaborative – you have all these talented people coming together. It's something I really enjoy.

"One of the things that's been so fun about making *Scotland From The Sky* is seeing all of the places I'd first come across in the archive. You have an inkling that it would be an interesting place to see and then there you are. One day you're looking at a place in a photograph and the next you're landing a helicopter on top of it!"

Although he enjoys his presenting work, James' first love will always be putting words down on the page.

On his latest book, *Wild History*, he says, "The book really stems from my work in the archive. I was so taken with the story of this place.

"It's so unusual because when it was first founded in 1908 it wasn't supposed to be an archive at all. It was established to try to understand what important ancient and historical monuments there were in Scotland – nobody knew how many there were.

"So it became someone's job to go out and try to find these sites. At the very first meeting with a sort of group of commissioners, they decided that this wasn't going to be a desk-based study.

"It was supposed to be basically working in a library, bringing together all these different accounts, working out where all the sites were and plotting them on one official map so that they could work towards protecting them.

"But then the decision that was taken in the very first meeting was that someone should go out into the landscape and actually see them – and it just snowballed." »

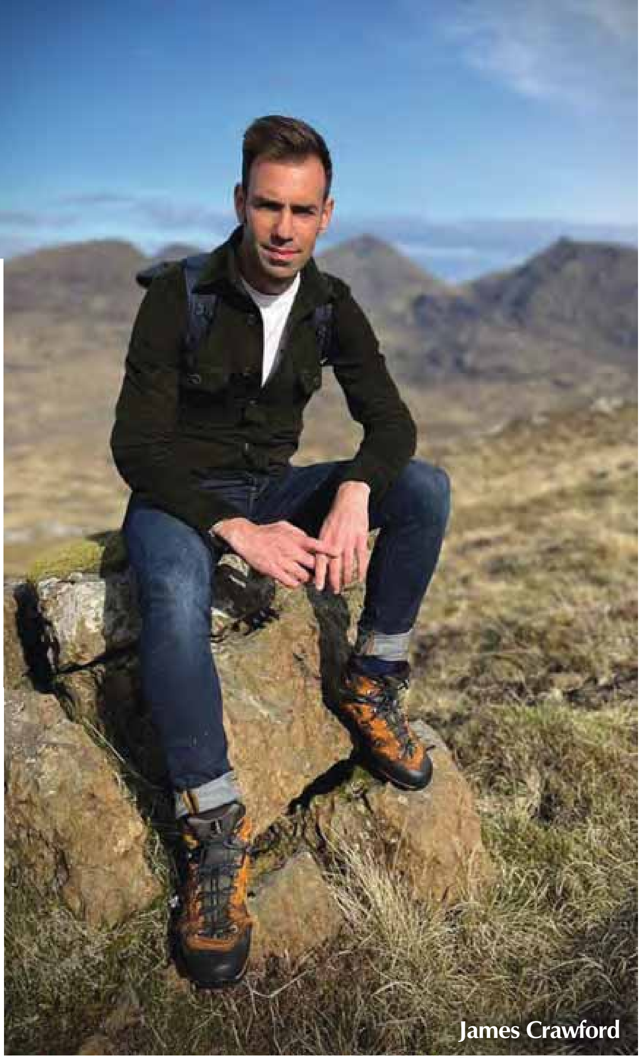
> *"I really like having control of the words as a presenter"*

Ailsa Craig

James Crawford

Above: Ardnamurchan

Right: Alexander Ormiston Curle



James Crawford

The job was given to Alexander Ormiston Curle, who set off on his bike in Berwickshire and spent months cycling around, speaking to local people and gathering information about old structures, buildings and earthwork.

"Curle finds hundreds of unknown or previously unrecorded sites. He continues moving around the country, finding more and more and more sites. He keeps a journal of his travels and an archive starts to build.

"So, you have this thing that's never supposed to be an archive that ends up with millions of items in it. It almost becomes this bizarre quest because the realisation is it's something that you can never complete," James says.

In the book, James visits more than 50 of these locations – from Ailsa Craig on the Firth of Clyde to a Viking boat burial site on Ardnamurchan – recording the ways in which Scotland's past has now merged with the wildness of the landscape.

"Some of these places have just been totally forgotten and effectively abandoned. There's no signage, there's no path, there's no access. Visiting those sites gives you such a charged connection to history, much more so than going on a tour of a castle or somewhere like that.

"Going to a place where people haven't lived for potentially thousands of years, but you can still find some trace of them – that's the wild history of the title.

"In some respects, it's oxymoronic to talk about wild history because history is about human activity. Wilderness is about places unaltered by human activity.

"What we find with these places is that nature has reclaimed them. They've been abandoned for so long, and they have had so few visitors that they have reacquired a wildness – an almost post-human wildness.

"I wanted to go out and visit these places myself, photograph them and write about my journey. For me, it's where you get the strongest connection to history – by visiting these wild places."

James says that he channelled his affection for fiction while penning the book.

"I decided to use my love of fiction and my interests stylistically, and apply them to a non-fiction environment.

"I really wanted there to be an atmosphere to the book and a sense of something that was beyond a basic account of the places I visited, so I decided to write about every location like I was crafting a short story.

"That was both a challenge for me and an inspiration. It's up to readers to decide if I've achieved that or not." S

> *"Some of these places have been forgotten"*

Wild History **by James Crawford is published by Birlinn and is out now.**

Pictures: ALAMY, REX/SHUTTERSTOCK, JAMES CRAWFORD

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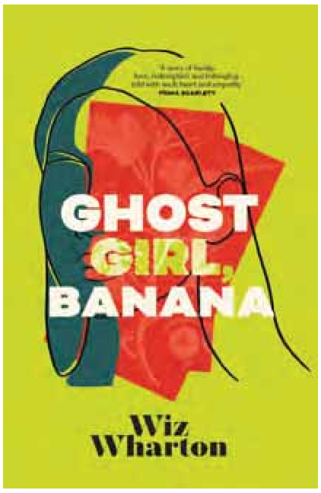
As we face this global pandemic, we are taking every precaution to keep our clients safe. We are following all regulations set out by the government and we urge all of our clients to do the same. Stay safe and wash your hands!

Scottish Bookshelf



Ghost Girl, Banana

Wiz Wharton
£14.99
HODDER & STOUGHTON

BOOK OF THE MONTH

SET in both the UK and Hong Kong, *Ghost Girl, Banana* is an extraordinary, poignant and enchanting tale about finding your identity and the true cost of belonging.

This meticulously constructed dual-timeline novel tells the stories of Sook-Yin and her daughter Lily.

In 1966, Sook-Yin is exiled from Kowloon to London with orders to restore honour to her family. As she strives to fit into a world that does not understand her, she realises that survival will mean carving out a destiny of her own.

> "Secret pilgrimage to discover her lost identity"

In 1997, Sook-Yin's daughter Lily can barely remember the mother she lost as a small child.

When she is unexpectedly named in the will of a powerful Chinese stranger, she embarks on a secret pilgrimage to Hong Kong to discover the lost side of her identity and claim her inheritance.

She soon learns that the secrecy around her heritage has deep roots, and good fortune comes at a price.

The novel – which was written by the Highland-based author after the posthumous discovery of her own mother's immigration diaries – is stunning, intriguing and compelling in equal turns.

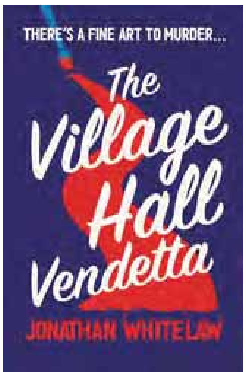
Wharton's prose is both lyrical and heart-wrenching. Her vivid descriptions of life in Kowloon and London bring both places to life, completely immersing us in different worlds and different time frames.

Giving two characters equal billing in any novel can be a tough thing to pull off, but Wharton pulls it out of the bag and then some.

Her intimate portrayals of Sook-Yin and Lily make us care deeply about both women, and we root for them as they each grapple with their identities and feelings of not belonging.

Heartbreakingly beautiful and yet still full of hope, *Ghost Girl, Banana* is an incredible story that will stay with readers long after the last page.

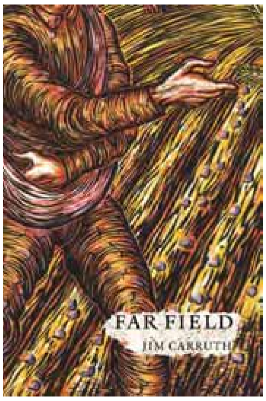
By Dawn Geddes



The Village Hall Vendetta

Jonathan Whitelaw
£8.99
HARPERNORTH

The Glaswegian Bingo Hall Detectives author is back with another delicious slice of mystery. The grand unveiling of a village hall, with a world-famous painting at its centre, is a murderous affair.

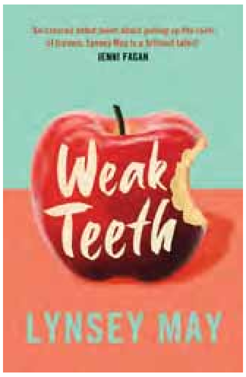


Far Field

Jim Carruth
£10
POLYGON

The final book in *The Auchensale Trilogy*, capturing the changing rural landscape of the west of Scotland. Following on from *Black Cart* and *Bale Fire*, Carruth's poetry celebrates his love of a country landscape and its people.

First for fact and fiction


JENNI FAGAN
Weak Teeth
LYNSEY MAY

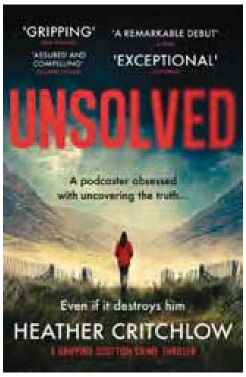
Weak Teeth

Lynsey May

£12.99

POLYGON

Ellie's boyfriend has fallen in love with someone else, her job's insecure, her bank account's empty and she has a mouthful of unreliable teeth. An original, quirky and heart-warming debut by a new Edinburgh-based writer.


'GRIPPING'
'A REMARKABLE DEBUT'
'ASSURED AND COMPELLING'
'EXCEPTIONAL'
UNSOLVED
A podcaster obsessed with uncovering the truth...
Even if it destroys him
HEATHER CRITCHLOW

Unsolved

Heather Critchlow

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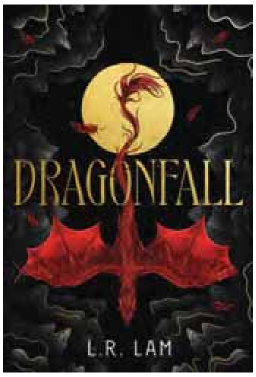
CANELO

Cal has been obsessed with getting justice for missing people's families ever since his sister disappeared when he was a child. Will a visit to Aberdeen help the true crime podcaster solve his own family's mystery?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Dragonfall

LR Lam

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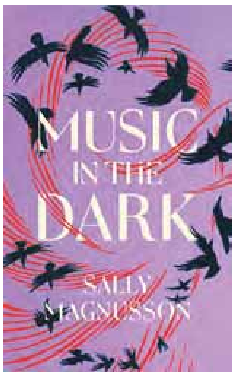
HODDER & STOUGHTON

Long ago, humans betrayed dragons, stealing their magic and banishing them to a dying world. Centuries later, their descendants worship dragons as gods. The first book in an epic fantasy trilogy by the Edinburgh-based author.


MUSIC IN THE DARK
SALLY MAGNUSSON

Music In The Dark

Sally Magnusson

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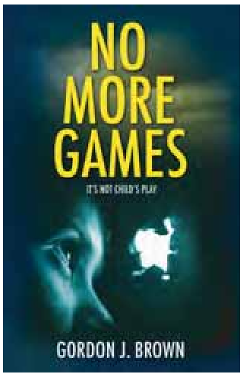
JOHN MURRAY PRESS

1884, a tenement in Rutherglen. An injured woman and a man recently arrived from America spend the night together. Through facing their past and the events of 30 years ago, they glimpse a future of new possibilities.


NO MORE GAMES
IT'S NOT CHILD'S PLAY
GORDON J. BROWN

No More Games

Gordon J Brown

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RED DOG PRESS

In '70s Glasgow, a 12-year-old boy stumbles across a gunman, who has evidence of police corruption. But when Ginger discovers that his policeman dad is mentioned on the tape, his world is turned upside-down.

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An irresistible love story
The Last Summer
SANTA MONTEFIORE

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Karen Swan

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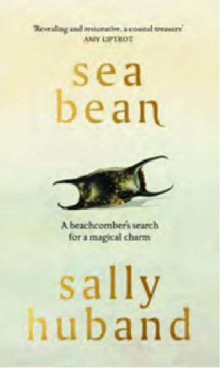
PAN MACMILLAN

Effie has never left the small island of St Kilda but, when Lord Sholto visits, her world changes. As she guides the handsome young visitor around the isle, she falls in love – until a storm hits and her life falls apart.

Scottish Bookshelf


sea bean
A beachcomber's search for a magical charm
sally huband

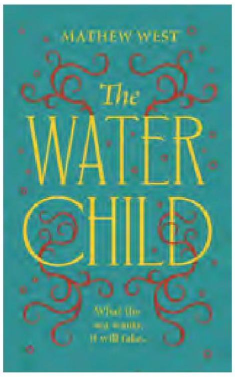
Sea Bean

Sally Huband

£18.99

HUTCHINSON HEINEMANN

A seed that falls from a vine in the tropics and travels across the ocean to Scottish shores is known as a sea bean. In this Shetland-based memoir, the author searches for her own sea bean, after pregnancy triggers a chronic illness.


MATHEW WEST
The WATER CHILD

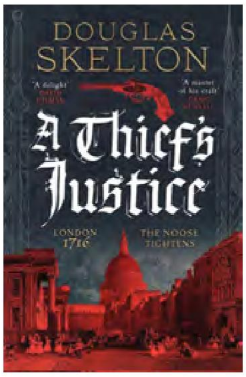
The Water Child

Mathew West

£14.99

HARPERNORTH

The Edinburgh-based writer's stunning new work is set in 1750s Portugal. Cecilia knew being a sea captain's wife would mean a life of waiting, but her husband has been gone too long. Soon she begins to fear as well as crave his return.


DOUGLAS SKELTON
A Thief's Justice
LONDON 1716
THE NOOSE TIGHTENS

A Thief's Justice

Douglas Skelton

£14.99

CANELO

The Glasgow-based author is back with the second book in his *Company Of Rogues* series. Thief, gambler and killer Jonas Flynt investigates the death of Justice Geoffrey Dumont, who was found dead at St Paul's Cathedral.

Next Month in *The Scots Magazine*…

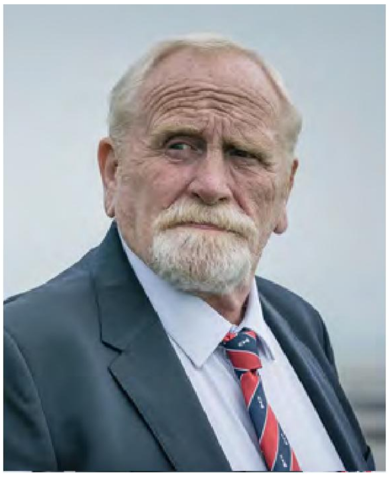
PLACES

Discover hidden gems in Aberdeenshire with your 14-page special

CULTURE

Go wild in the country at the 2023 Wildhood Children's Festival

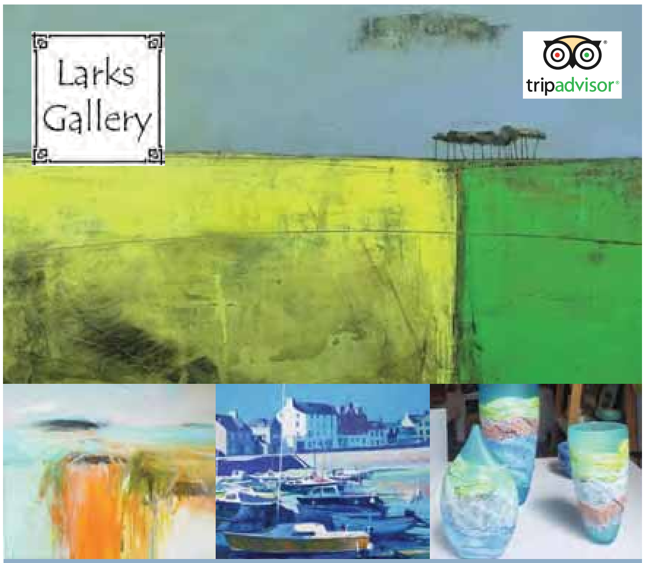
PEOPLE



Scottish acting legend James Cosmo on living his life with no regrets

ON SALE MAY 11, 2023

Pictures: ALAMY, REX/SHUTTERSTOCK



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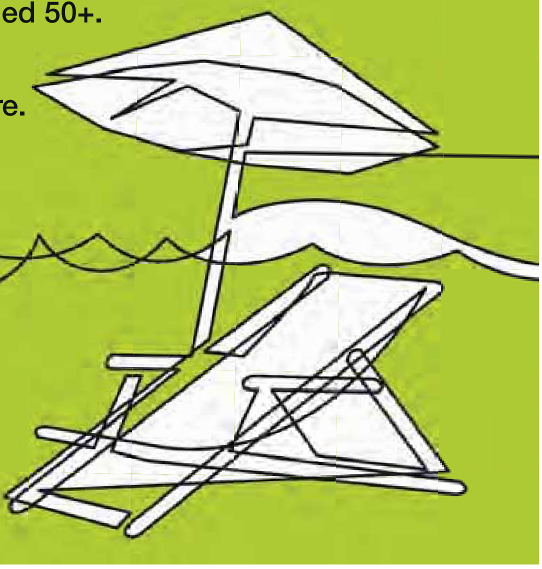

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LORD OF GLENCOE

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— FROM THE — VAULT

Strange tales from the archives. This month – This ostentatious soldier's ghost named his killers

by CHRIS FERGUSON

Braemar Castle

IN the days after the 1745 Jacobite uprising was quelled, Sergeant Arthur Davis strode the Perthshire hills like the conquering hero he was.

The Englishman was a member of General Guise's Regiment of Foot, posted to the Perthshire and Aberdeenshire hills to discourage any insurrection.

While the bulk of the regiment was garrisoned at Braemar Castle, Sergeant Davis and his men were quartered on and fed by the struggling population of Inverey, Aberdeenshire.

The people there had seldom encountered such a flash character. He wore a cocked hat trimmed with silver lace and the coat of his uniform, complete with gold epaulettes, boasted no fewer than 24 silver buttons. Silver buckles glinted at his knees and on his shoes.

Sergeant Davis was also known to carry a silk purse full of gold and an outrageously large silver pocket watch.

While he did not care much for his Highland posting, the sergeant did love to shoot and fish.

In September 1749 he led a party to meet a company from Spittal of Glenshee. On the return journey, the sergeant let his men go ahead while he pursued game.

He was never seen alive again. Two local men – Alexander Macdonald and Duncan Clark – did, however, supposedly become flush with cash afterwards.

Around four years after the disappearance, rumours swept the district that the sergeant's ghost had appeared and named the killers. It was not long before the military heard the stories and arrested Macdonald and Clark.

In 1754, at the High Court in Edinburgh, Alexander Macpherson of Inverey stated that four years previously, in 1750, the sergeant's ghost led him to where the body lay. The ghost's second appearance, this time without clothes, was corroborated by Isobel McHardy, who shared a shieling with Macpherson.

She told the court that she saw a naked man bent over Macpherson's bed and concluded it must be a ghost.

Macdonald and Clark were found not guilty, however.

One contemporary account stated that the people were "overawed by military despotism" and was critical of the soldier's pomposity.

It contrasts sharply with a version by Sir Walter Scott, also based on court records, which empathises with "poor Sergeant Davis" and his thankless task in the Highlands. Ⓢ

> *"She concluded it must be a ghost"*

Spittal of Glenshee

Pictures: ALAMY

Best Of The Fest

With more than 500 events, there's something for every dram lover at this year's Spirit of Speyside Whisky Festival

by EUAN DUGUID

IT'S home to some of the most famous whisky brands on the planet.

And extraordinary Scotch will abound at this year's Spirit of Speyside Whisky Festival, running from April 26 to May 1.

Yet behind the prestige is a hard-working army of volunteers, whose potent blend of passion and no-nonsense drive is the very spark in the spectacular.

"Events like this don't just happen – the community comes together and welcomes the world to Speyside," says Spirit stalwart and long-serving festival board member Linda Mellis.

Linda Mellis

First launched in 1999, the annual celebration has now developed into one of the largest uisge beatha showcases of its kind, anywhere in the world.

With a programme of more than 500 events over six days, thousands of guests – from 35 countries – will experience all the magic of the nation's most prolific malt-producing region.

Now retired, Linda worked in the whisky industry for 43 years, starting out in 1972. Ascending through the ranks, she finished her career in marketing for distillery visitor centres, brand homes and community support for malt distilling at major drinks firm Diageo.

Today, Linda has maintained a reputation for laser focus and making things happen.

"With such a focus on customers and visitors during my career, I am always thinking about the person, the customer, the visitor, the guest – what are they hoping to get from their visit, their time with us and their engagement with us?" she says.

"Are we delivering on that and exceeding expectations? What can we do to make sure our visitors and customers get the best experience during their visit?"

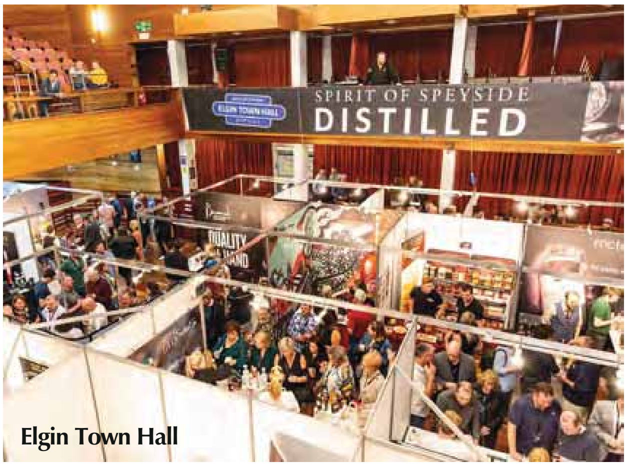
Linda brings these exacting standards to her main festival role, coordinating the Spirit of Speyside Whisky Awards.

The judging process takes place in two stages. The first round – held in March – is a blind nosing and tasting of Speyside's finest malts by a selected panel of expert judges.

The panel shortlists two whiskies from each of the four categories. The finalists are announced at the festival and are judged – by visitors themselves – at events throughout the week.

The results are then compiled with the votes from other public judging events that are hosted throughout the rest of the year, across the world. The final winners of the class of 2023-24 will be announced in at the opening

Glenfiddich Distillery



Elgin Town Hall

Pouring a dram

“It’s becoming like the Eurovision Song Contest”

ceremony of next year’s event – 2022-23’s top of the crop will be crowned this month.

Linda says, “It’s becoming like the Eurovision Song Contest, with votes received from many countries around the world – Germany, Italy, Holland, Norway, Sweden.”

The epicentre of activity is at the festival itself, of course, with public judging sessions held across the week. And the glamour belies the hard graft.

“The main thing that I have learned is to make sure that everything is in place the day before the event to help ensure that it goes without a hitch,” says Linda.

“Something that might sound simple, for example, providing whisky glasses – but each participant gets to sample eight whiskies! There could be as many as 500 glasses to wash and dry at the end of a session.

“They then need to be repacked and ready for the next event. It is long hours and, as with any event on this scale, there will rarely be two challenges the same.

“What I have found though, is that if everything is undertaken with a healthy dose of laughter, the long hours and the challenges are worth it.

“The people behind the scenes are dedicated to the community and passionate about whisky.”

In recent times that local passion was only amplified as global events conspired.

Covid-19 saw the festival become an online event. The pivot to a virtual format was tinged with a sense of removal from the buzz of the in-person version.

Crucially, however, it retained vital momentum and connection – which is paying dividends today.

“Last year was our first ‘in person’ festival since 2019. Although it was cautious, visitors still came,” Linda says.

“This year we have seen record demand after tickets opened for sale in January. Many events sold out within the first days.”

Despite the evident success, Linda is as modest as she is driven.

She insists she’s part of a wider network who make the event happen – bringing many benefits to the region.

Linda, however, personifies the ethic and warm human spirit of this festival. Just as this festival – in its strong sense of community and commitment to excellence – epitomises the very, very best of the Scotch industry. Ⓢ

Get Into The Spirit

From distilleries to village halls, local whisky bars to historic castles and the great outdoors, more than 500 events are taking place throughout the scenic region of Speyside.
Visit **www.spiritofspeyside.com** for more info.

Pictures: SPIRIT OF SPEYSIDE WHISKY FESTIVAL

Fusion Of Flavours

Using exquisite Scottish seafood in a classy dish with a Japanese twist

A PAIR of acclaimed chefs – Paul Tamburrini and Martin Wishart – launched Tamburrini & Wishart at Cameron House Hotel in 2021.

The fine dining duo have created a space on the glorious bonnie banks of Loch Lomond, offering a contemporary and innovative dining experience with seasonal produce at its heart.

Mixing culinary excellence, modern techniques and classic flavours, guests can enjoy dishes from the five-course tasting menu and three-course lunch menu, which change every two weeks. Each menu can be paired with wines chosen by the resident expert sommelier.

Here Paul Tamburrini reveals how to make the restaurant's signature sea scallops with dashi butter sauce and Oscietra Caviar, which he describes as "a wonderful fusion of flavours and textures".

Inspired by Scotland's natural larder, at Tamburrini & Wishart guests can sample world-class seafood – including hand-dived Orkney scallops, Exmoor Caviar and fresh langoustines. This classy dish, which is a firm favourite with diners, uses two of these exquisite ingredients.

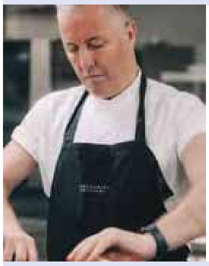
Using hand-dived Orkney scallops – renowned for their fresh, sweet and clean flavour – diners should take the time to find out how these delicacies were gathered.

In often rough water, brave divers enter the water off Orkney a maximum of three times a day, though they are not allowed to dive every day for health reasons. They spend no more than 20 to 30 minutes on each dive – so they must work quickly to gather enough scallops to make their living.

You should never take hand-dived scallops for granted – it's a risky business!

This smooth, fresh flavour – spiked with just a hint of danger – is combined with a dashi butter sauce for a savoury Japanese twist. It is complemented by the classic Exmoor Oscietra Caviar, which adds a creamy and nutty taste, and is a nod to true class.

For an extra flourish, garnish with fresh edible flowers. Ⓢ



Paul Tamburrini and Martin Wishart lead Cameron House's fine dining restaurant Tamburrini & Wishart

Roasted Orkney Sea Scallops With Dashi Butter

Ingredients
Serves 4

- 4 large raw Orkney scallops in the shell
- Olive oil for cooking
- 50g unsalted butter
- ¼ of a lemon
- Sea salt
- 20g of Exmoor Oscietra Caviar (served straight from the fridge)

For the dashi butter sauce
- 40ml Tosazu (dashi vinegar)
- 20ml Chardonnay white wine vinegar
- 250g French butter, finely diced
- 10ml double cream

Method

1 Open the scallops carefully and rinse the white meat, then lay on a dry cloth and put in the fridge until ready to use.
2 For the dashi butter sauce – combine the Tosazu, vinegar and cream in a saucepan over a medium heat. Bring to the boil then set aside, gradually adding the butter.
3 Whisk the butter until incorporated and emulsified, then add a little lemon juice.
4 Remove the scallops from fridge 20 minutes before cooking.
5 Heat a non-stick pan over a medium to high heat and add oil. Place each scallop presentation side down. Gently press and cook until caramelised on one side.
6 Remove the scallops from the pan and rest for 1-2 minutes. Cut each one into three slices. Season with sea salt and lemon juice.
7 Dress each scallop with the butter sauce in a serving bowl and finish with a generous topping of Exmoor Oscietra Caviar. Serve immediately.

Don't miss another great recipe from a new star chef next month!

Pictures: CALUM McMILLAN

THE ARROCHAR

The Arrochar Hotel

Arrochar, Argyll & Bute

A cosy, comfy hotel on the stunning shores of a loch

by NADINE STEWART

The Arrochar Hotel

NESTLED at the foot of the Arrochar Alps and on the shores of Loch Long, the setting of The Arrochar Hotel is breathtaking.

Built in the 19th century, this three-star property is now part of the Bespoke Hotels Group and features 76 comfortable en suite bedrooms.

Its location and reasonable rates make it the ideal base for exploring the area.

Just a mile from Arrochar and Tarbet Railway Station, the hotel is only two miles from Loch Lomond. Glasgow can be reached in under an hour, and Argyll Forest Park is a five-minute drive away.

The whole family is welcome at the hotel as they are dog-friendly, charging a single flat fee of £10 per dog, per stay.

I'm not from the area and had an early start the next day trail running nearby, so it made sense to stay locally for the evening.

There is ample free car parking right in front of the hotel, so no long walks to reception with your baggage.

Upon check-in the receptionist was friendly and helpful, directing me to the main staircase and lift area. My single room for the night was located on the second floor.

The hotel decor has a traditional, homely feel and, although not mentioned on their website, at the time of visiting it was clear that there was some cosmetic upgrading happening in some of the rooms and public spaces.

My room smelled of fresh paint and had been tastefully decorated in neutral tones.

It was beautifully positioned with fantastic views over the loch and, while a little on the small side, I was only there to sleep for a one night so this didn't phase me.

My en suite bathroom was a good size, with a brand new electric shower in the spotless cubicle.

Once I had settled in, and prepared my gear for the following day's adventure, I headed back downstairs to order an evening meal.

The restaurant serves a traditional menu, featuring local specialities from the Scottish Highlands. I wasn't looking for anything fancy so I asked to see the menu for the bar lounge.

I chose a table and comfortable chair at the window and perused my options. A good selection of firm family favourites were on the menu – like steak and ale pie or a burger – but I decided on fish and chips.

My food arrived quickly and I was not disappointed. My fish

Picture: ALAMY

HOTEL

was even bigger than the large plate it came on, accompanied by chips, mushy peas and some homemade tartare sauce.

The meal was excellent. The fish batter was crispy and cooked to perfection.

I settled my bill, paying £18 for my main meal and soft drink, then went out for post-meal stroll along the loch.

There is a patio beer garden which sits at the front of the hotel and guests can take in the idyllic setting while enjoying food and drinks in warmer weather.

Returning to my cosy room, it wasn't long before I settled down for the night in my comfortable bed.

After a peaceful sleep, I checked out so early the reception staff hadn't yet begun their shift.

Heading to my car, I took one last look down beautiful Loch Long. Ⓢ

www.bespokehotels.com/arrocharhotel

Double room

Fish and chips

The Cauldron

Edinburgh

Catriona Thomson enjoys a truly magical afternoon tea experience

FOOD: We were promised a bewitching experience – and The Cauldron delivered! First, we were provided with wands which we used to solve a riddle and open a chest – inside were different teas and flavourings which we added to our teabags to create a unique blend. Then the food arrived. The sandwiches were delicious, and the scones – sparkly thanks to edible glitter! – were served with cream and jam. They were sizable and fresh. Dainty macarons, traybakes, Bakewell tarts, lemon tortes and chocolate tortes completed the spread. There was plenty to eat and, when we were finished, there was another "potion" tea to mix. Our add-on cocktails were dispensed out of a dragon's mouth, while ale poured out of a snake's mouth. **8/10**

SERVICE: The service was excellent – all we had to do to summon help was wave our wands in the air. The staff were helpful, polite and friendly, and stuck to their characters – they really made us feel we were entering a wizarding world and explained how to use our magic wands. **10/10**

AMBIENCE: It was a quirky and extraordinary experience. The room was busy, but our table was in an alcove, which felt more intimate. The wands were a great touch, and we were also given magical capes to wear. **9/10**

VALUE FOR MONEY: It was a special occasion so we didn't mind splurging. At £40 per person – plus extra for cocktails – it's expensive. **7/10**

FACILITIES: Clean and tidy, but bear in mind they're up a few stairs. **8/10**

42/50

thecauldron.io/edinburgh

YOUR OPINION MATTERS TO US AT THE Scots MAGAZINE

DO you have an opinion that you want to share? And do you want that opinion to influence important decisions about your favourite magazine? If so, we would like to invite you to apply to join our *Scots Magazine* reader panel.

As a member of the panel, not only will your views on the features and advertising content in *The Scots Magazine* help shape the future of the magazine, you will also be entered into a monthly prize draw. Each month, one panellist will win £200 and two runners-up will scoop £25 each.

How does it work?

We at *The Scots Magazine* value our content and our readers, so we have partnered with Research & Analysis of Media UK (RAM) to create online research panels. The surveys ask for our readers' opinions on editorial and advertising content in our magazine and website.

Once you sign up to the RAM panel, as a panellist you will be sent online surveys to complete, which will ask what you thought about stories and features – as well as about your awareness of advertisements in the pages of your *Scots Magazine*.

Your opinions and views will then be taken on board by decision makers at *The Scots Magazine*.

What is it like being a member of the reader panel?

Some current members of the reader panel have expressed their enjoyment about being part of the discussions, and encourage others to join because "the bigger cross-section of the public, the better the spread of views".

One panellist said, "I enjoy being on *The Scots Magazine* Panel. The surveys are varied and enjoyable. I like sharing my views on all sorts of subjects."

A second panel member agreed that it is enjoyable, and added, "The varied subjects we are asked to comment on are interesting and I like the topical subjects, too."

> *"I enjoy taking part in the surveys as it makes me think about how others would look at things."*

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How do I sign up?

To take part and give your opinion, and potentially influence editorial and advertising decisions, just scan the QR code and sign up on the RAM website.
Or you can log on to:
www.scotsmagazine.com/readerpanel

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H

Community hero Heather Black helped to save lives during a public health crisis

by LAURA BROWN

Heather Black

IN the 1980s, Edinburgh was in the stranglehold of an HIV epidemic.

The first case was recorded in 1983, and infection rates rose to seven times the national average within five years. The city was dubbed "the AIDS capital of Europe".

Heroin addicts – particularly those living in and around estates such as Muirhouse – were vilified and abandoned. Tests suggested that in the few years after the virus was discovered, more than 60% of intravenous drug users in Scotland's capital were HIV-positive.

> "She treated everyone with empathy and respect"

Radical action was urgently needed. Enter Muirhouse resident Heather, who co-founded Support Help and Advice on Drug Addiction (SHADA), now known as North Edinburgh Drug and Alcohol Centre.

The police had been taking a hardline approach to tackling Edinburgh's heroin problem but, by seizing drug paraphernalia, needle sharing became rife – with the risk of catching and transmitting HIV.

Working alongside medical professionals such as Muirhouse GP Dr Roy Robertson, Heather advocated for the establishment of a needle exchange programme that undoubtedly helped slow the spread of the virus and prevented deaths.

Her understanding that addiction is often a symptom of circumstance was refreshingly forward-thinking – Heather knew unemployment, poverty and poor social housing provision were factors in pushing people towards heroin and treated everyone in the grip of addiction with empathy and respect, fighting their cause with quick-witted determination.

She strove to end the discrimination and disparity that underpinned heroin use and, in turn, HIV's ruthless rampage across the city. She never shied away from asking difficult questions, and wouldn't take no for an answer.

For this formidable woman, the battle against injustice, inaction and inequality was never over – there were always causes that could do with a hefty dose of Heather.

She died in 2020, but Heather had played a crucial part in righting the wrongs of others during one of Edinburgh's most deadly and devastating public health crises, and her trailblazing initiative and unwavering support saved lives. Ⓢ

Muirhouse

Pictures: ALAMY

Other Greats...

Bobby Hogg
As the last fluent speaker of Cromarty's fisherfolk dialect, Bobby made headlines across the globe when he died in 2012, taking a slice of fascinating linguistic heritage with him.

Alexander Horn
A Benedictine monk from Oyne, in Aberdeenshire, with a surprisingly wild and vibrant social life – oh, and he was a British secret agent during the French Revolution to boot!

Mary Hogarth
Until her death at just 17 years old, the Edinburgh-born sister-in-law of the prolific author Charles Dickens was a trusted early reader of his manuscripts, and provided inspiration for several characters.

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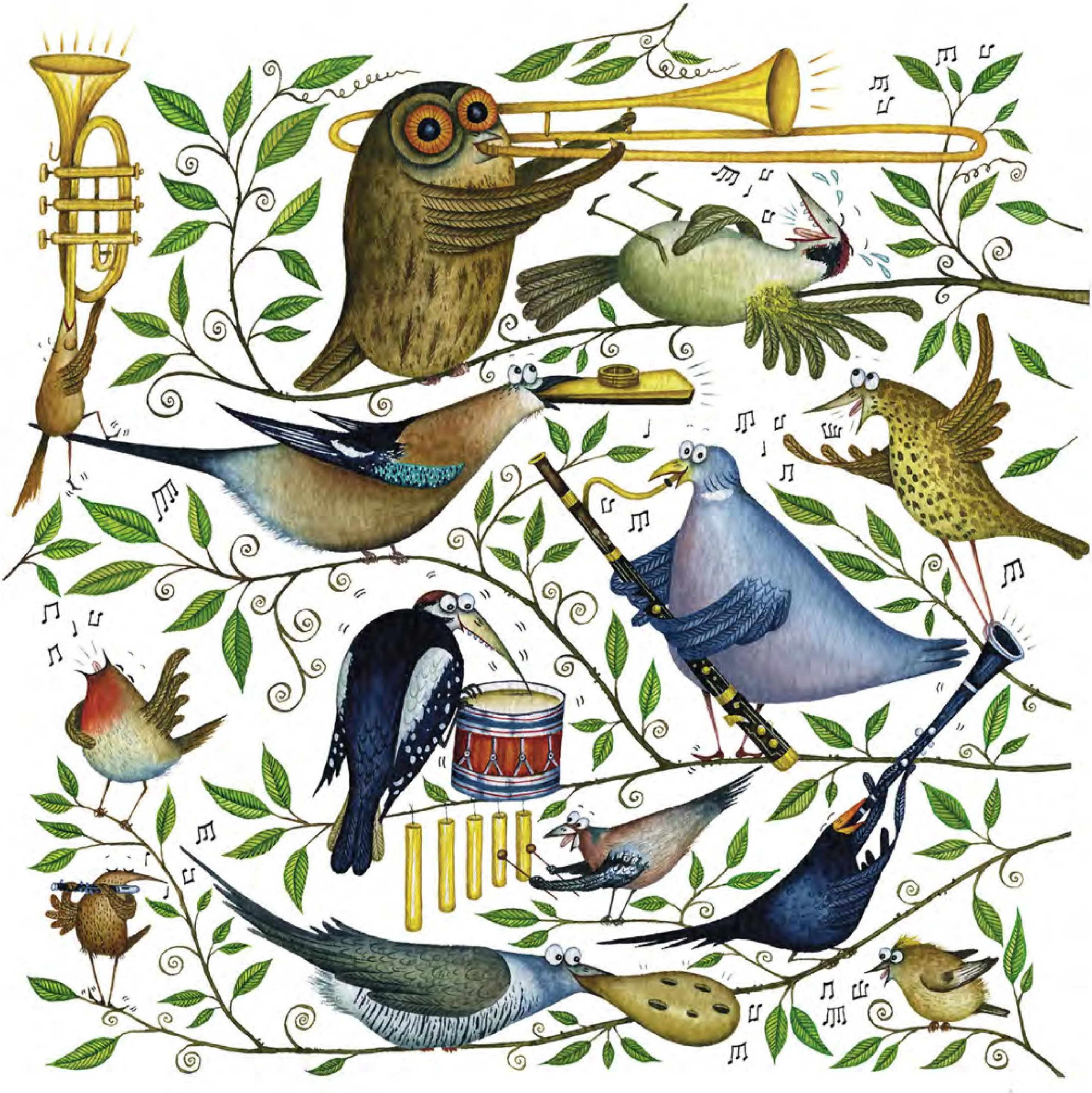

The Art Of Nature

Watercolourist Clare Mackie spent years living in London, but has finally followed her heart home to her beloved Scotland

by POLLY PULLAR

»

THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH
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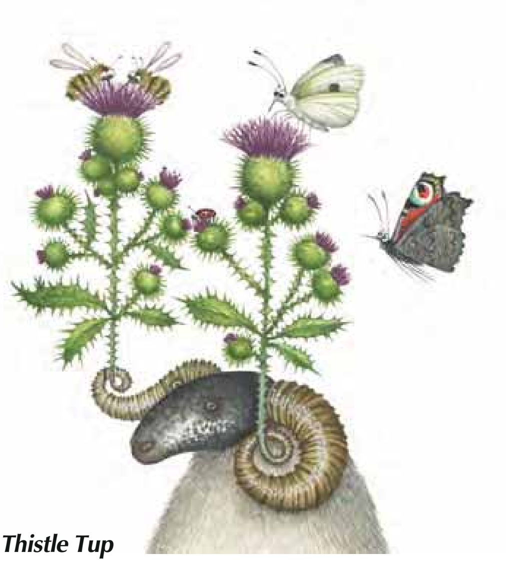


Thistle Tup

NATURE and animals have always inspired Scottish artist Clare Mackie – and the weirder and more wonderful, the better.

From the stirrings in meadow grasses of minute insects revving up their little engines to the details and colours of a toad's warty skin, the empty snail shells and fragments of birds' eggshells, the dried husks, seed pods, feathers and skulls.

All these beautiful fragments of nature provide rich scope for her pictures.

As a tiny child, Clare was like a magpie, collecting and examining the fascinating things she found – things most would overlook. She describes her work as "quirky watercolour", but it's hard to fit her style into any genre.

Her keen eye for minutiae is astonishing and, despite the humour in her work, the hats and gloves, the belts and shoes, and the patterns of clothing worn by her subjects, the portrayals of the wild or domestic are sharply accurate in colour, form and character.

She misses nothing in textures of feathers or hair, and her sense of the ridiculous is evident in her priceless depictions of the eccentricities of the human condition.

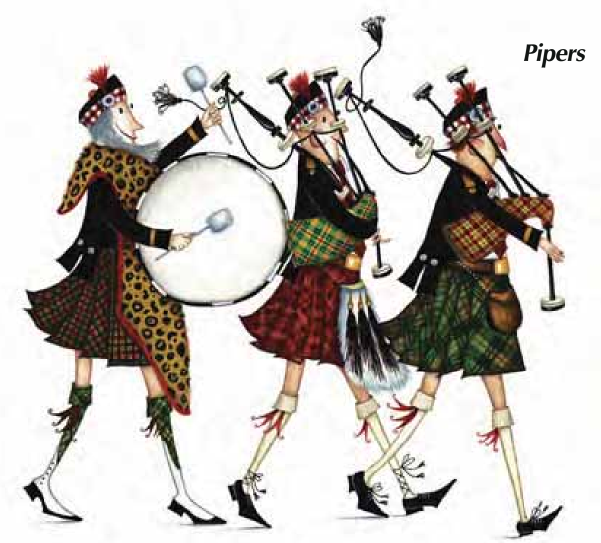
Brought up on a large arable and pig farm in Kincardineshire, Clare was also inspired by her artist mother, whose glorious gardens provided a constant wealth of material. They both loved the work of Ronald Searle, Edward Lear and Quentin Blake.

Clare always knew that becoming a professional artist would not be straightforward.

"I took a year out after school and went to Dudhope Art Centre in Dundee, where the brilliant James Morrison helped and supported me while I did an A-level in art and design, as well as evening classes in life drawing at

DID YOU KNOW?

Clare Mackie's new exhibition runs from June 6-7 at the Buddon Burn Suite, Forbes of Kingennie Country Resort, Kingennie, Broughty Ferry, Dundee, DD5 3RD, from 11am to 5pm. There are restaurant and bar facilities, fishing and golf, too.



Pipers

Brechin

> “*Friends said it was time I came home*”

Duncan of Jordanstone. It was an intense and creative year. I then went to Edinburgh College of Art for five years to study illustration, ceramics and printmaking.

“Being around other creative souls and embracing that life with like-minded people was a grounding experience. I was a small fish in a huge creative pond and certainly not special.

“The ego tends to take off if one’s not careful, but there wasn’t a chance of that happening there.”

Clare says, “It gave me more confidence, although I floundered when I left as I was ill-equipped for the commercial world.”

Trying to find work, she received knock-back after knock-back and was, like so many young artists, struggling financially.

But she says, “These times give you a backbone of steel, and I look back with no regrets and amazement that I had the tenacity to keep going, though, at the time, I felt I had no other choice.

“I was sadly getting so little interest in my work in Scotland, and a kind advertising art director in Edinburgh told me I wouldn’t make it here and suggested I move to Berlin, New York or London to try my luck.

“London was a city I’d been to many times, and I had friends and family there, so I took a deep breath and headed south. I spent the night before I left with close friends, having a dram in the heather, listening to stags roaring. At the time, I thought the next roaring I heard would be the traffic in central London.

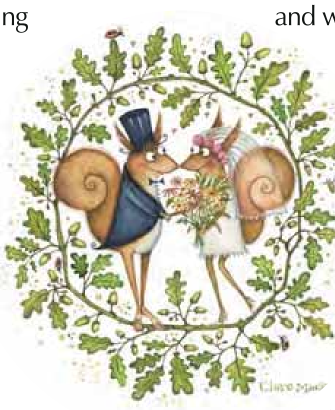
“It was hard work going for dozens of interviews, but slowly commissions came and suddenly I couldn’t keep up with demand.”

Since then, Clare has illustrated regular columns in publications including *Good Housekeeping* and *Tatler*, and has a long list of similar commissions.

She has created advertising material, logos and designs for dozens of prestigious companies and charities – including Chanel, Harvey Nichols, *The New Yorker*, IBM, Trish McEvoy, Macallan, Murton Trust, The Folio Society, Caspari, the BBC and The Archie Foundation, for which she has since become a patron.

She has also illustrated a selection of children’s books, including a collaboration with Michael Rosen, a children’s author she adores.

Her daft dogs, eccentric English and Scotsmen, deer, birds, squirrels, fish, flowers and insects pop up on cards, stationery, wrapping paper, hairbrushes, combs and water bottles.



Wedding Squirrels

And at Christmas, Clare’s take on the rotund, red-faced, over-fed Santa Claus and his ubiquitous robin, reindeer and elf companions are seen on cards and Christmas decorations.

In addition, she has had ranges of kitchenware, mugs and other ceramics, including cheese boards.

Finally, after a 31-year stint living in the south, Clare has returned home.

“So many things came together to gel that decision. Lockdown wasn’t a great time and it made me feel so far away from my family,” she says. “My mum was very unwell, and my dad was looking after her with no help – it was heartbreaking.

“As soon as lockdown was over, I went north to stay with my parents. Mum was terminally ill – it was the final »

Clare Mackie

Forbes of Kingennie

stretch for a previously vivacious and unstoppable force of nature. She was in a wheelchair and virtually paralysed.

"I returned the following month for 10 days and had a wonderful two-day exhibition at Forbes of Kingennie, near Dundee, and saw so many friends and family members who gave us so much support.

"It was poignant as, in my heart, I knew it was the last time I'd see Mum. So many friends mentioned that it was time I 'came home'. My house in Brighton was on the market as I wanted to move to a rural setting in the south. Now I realised it was time to return north instead.

"After my mother died, I arrived in Brechin to stay with my father until I could find the right house and, despite a long wait, I found it. It's a tranquil spot with a lovely garden – red squirrels, woodpeckers, garden birds and a heron that wafts past.

"I have always loved the characters seen in corvids – murderous magpies abound, and I am in heaven.

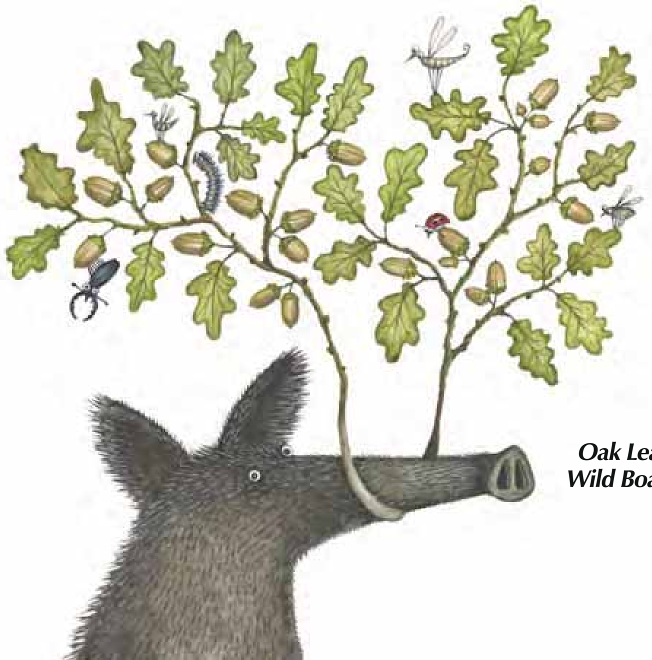
"Being back in Scotland has changed my colour palette to match the hills' hues and moody skies. Gazing from my studio window is calming as it's so verdant.

"Occasionally a deer pops its head over the fence, or a squirrel rushes down the steps en route to the nut feeder.

"Sunsets and sunrises are breathtaking, as there's no light pollution. I had to be in the south for all these years, but now it's so good to have this next chapter unfolding in a nature-fuelled way. I'm feeling very blessed."

Though the journey to reach her goal has, as Clare admits, been exhausting and soul-destroying, her tenacity has paid off. All the doors she knocked on, the rebuffs she received, that she is now a revered artist proves the importance of never accepting no for an answer.

The dream has come full circle and Clare is home in her beloved Scotland, doing what she loves best. Ⓢ


Oak Leaf Wild Boar

FASCINATING FACTS

Murton Trust is a charity with a dual educational and environmental purpose – situated on a former quarry near Forfar, it manages a thriving nature reserve, visitor farm and tearoom.

James Morrison's artistic career spanned seven decades, and he taught at Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art in Dundee from 1965 to 1987.

Clare is the talent behind the well-known Archie Foundation logo, which shows Archie the bear holding his beloved bunny Rabbie.

Pictures: REX\SHUTTERSTOCK, ALAMY, CLARE MACKIE

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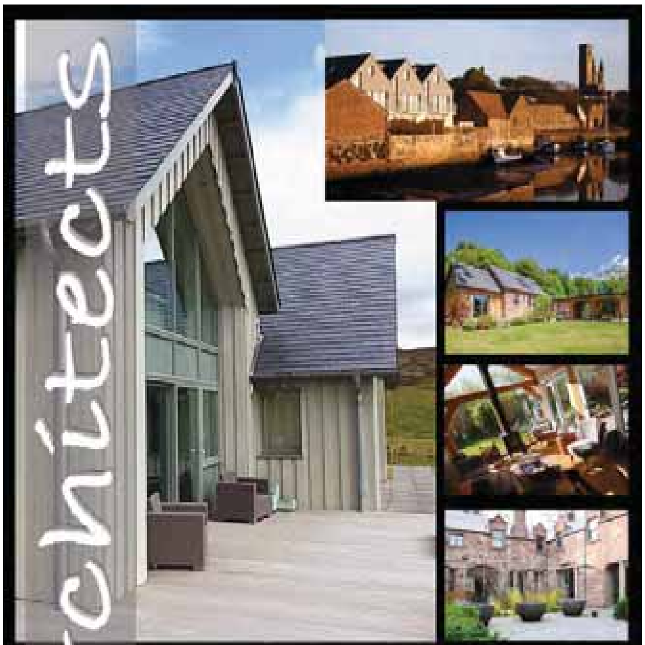

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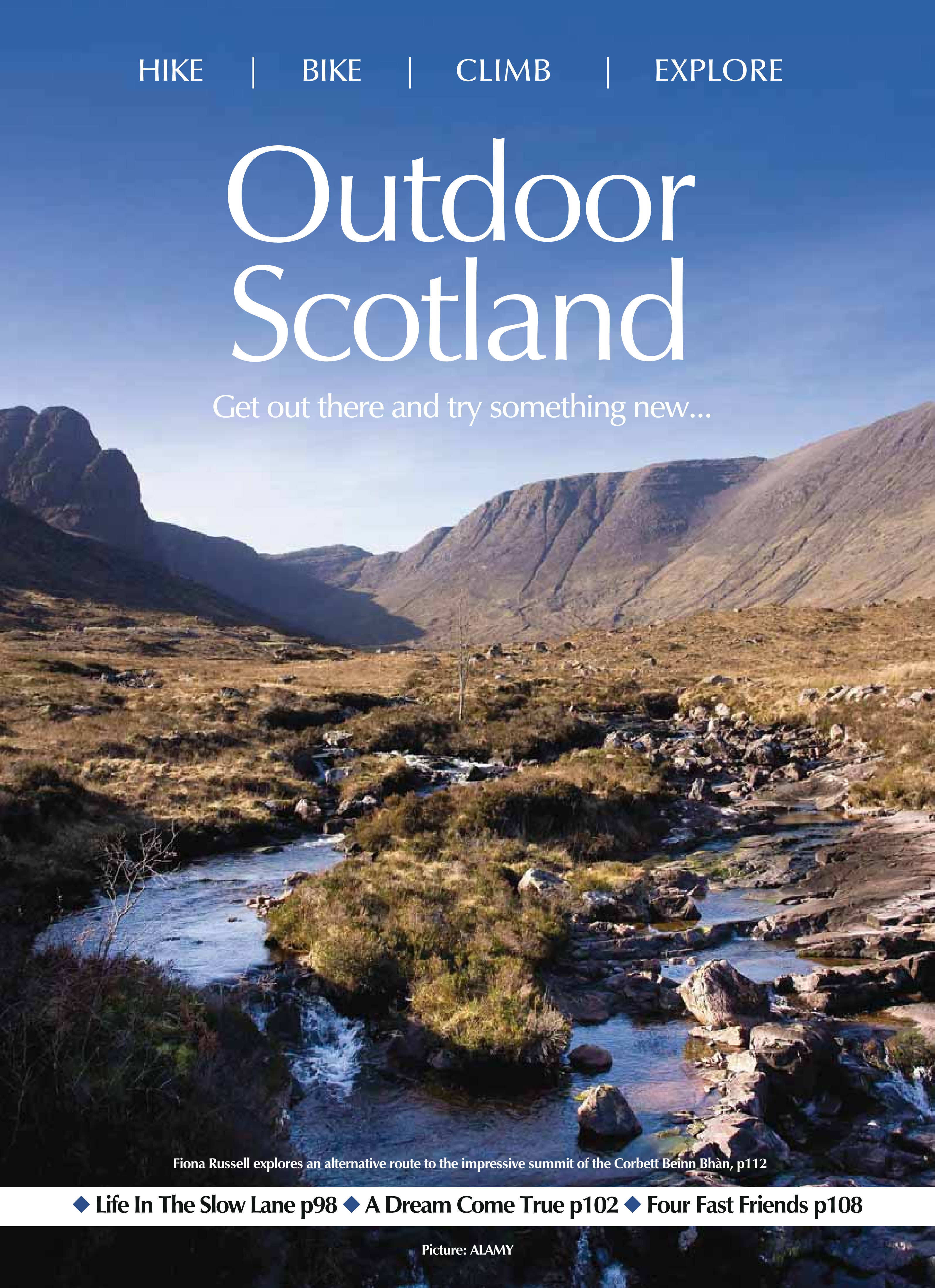


Fiona Russell explores an alternative route to the impressive summit of the Corbett Beinn Bhàn, p112

◆ Life In The Slow Lane p98 ◆ A Dream Come True p102 ◆ Four Fast Friends p108

Picture: ALAMY

Life In The Slow Lane

Author and photographer Rebecca Gibson has no interest in flying visits to Scots tourist hotspots – she wants visitors to really get to know places

by NICK DRAINEY

REBECCA GIBSON'S approach to tourism is not a typical bus tour day out, where you tick off as many "must-see" destinations as possible – probably ending the day weary, but with a camera full of hastily-snapped pictures.

She says, "It's not about rushing around and seeing everything in one go – it's about going to a single place and immersing yourself in it. Only then can you truly experience somewhere."

The outlook of the outdoor writer and photographer, who lives in Burghead, Moray, is to take it easy and really get to know a place, maybe off the beaten track or at least at a time when visitor numbers are very low – or, even better, at zero.

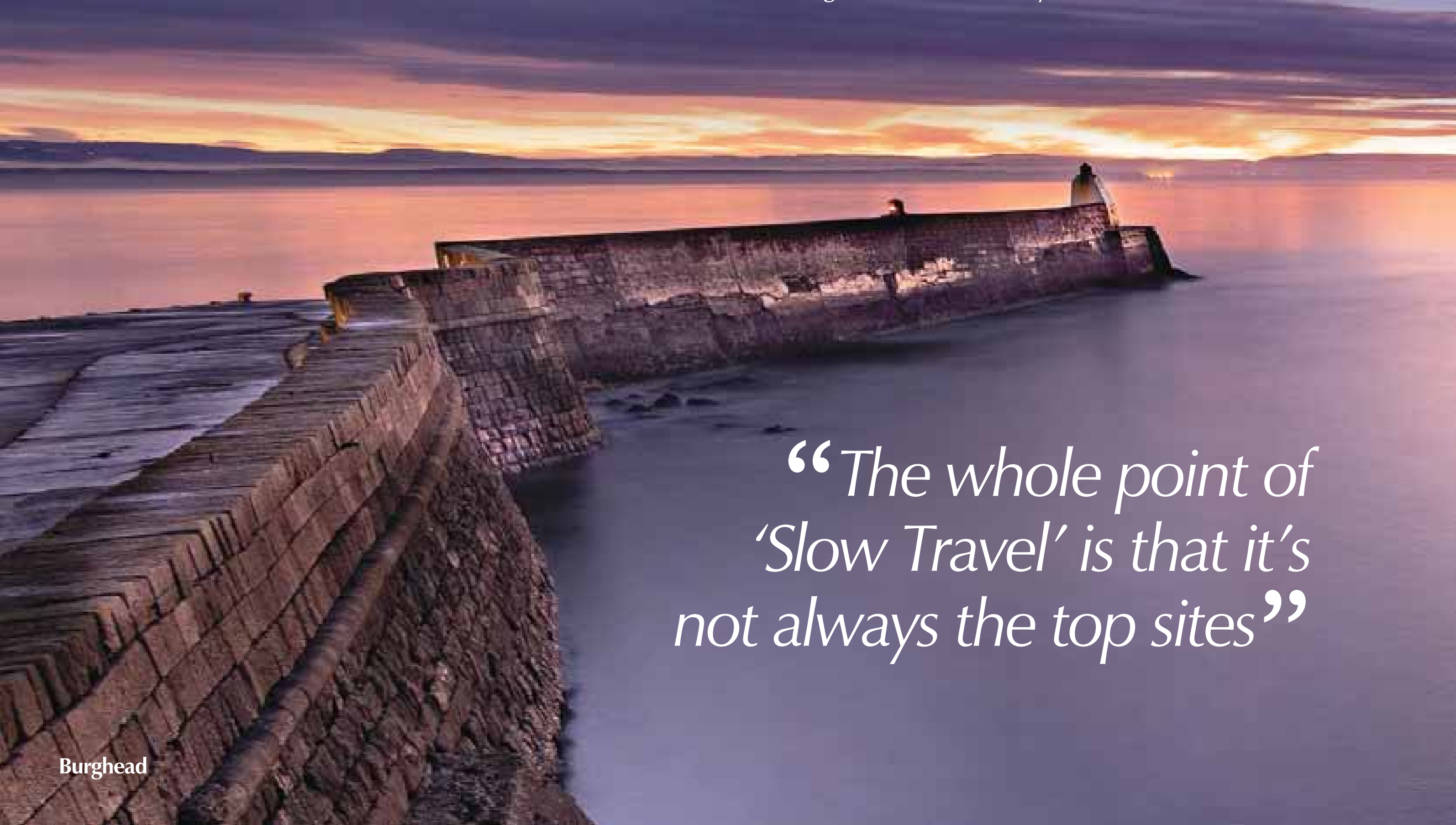
Rebecca Gibson

The concept is known as Slow Travel and is definitely a growing trend – one she applied when writing a guidebook covering "special places" to visit in north-east Scotland.

Rebecca started her travels for the book in September 2021, with a remit of uncovering "hidden gems" in Aberdeenshire, Moray and the Cairngorms National Park.

But where to start? She says, "The whole point of Slow Travel is that it's not always the top sites."

As with all of her work, she had a desire to make her book accessible for everyone, saying, "My background is in wildlife and that stereotypically appeals mostly to men and older people – I do like bucking the trend in that way.


Burghead

> *"The whole point of 'Slow Travel' is that it's not always the top sites"*

Provost Skene's House

East Aquhorthies

"I believe that if I can inspire a young girl to get muddy and sit in the freezing cold photographing hares at 4am, I've done my job right."

There was also a need for food. "Local food is a great way to get to know an area and I firmly advocate the idea of shopping small – avoiding supermarket chains and finding produce made in the area, often using traditional techniques and family recipes," Rebecca says.

And while the natural world has always been her main interest, she knew she had to combine nature reserves and isolated ruined castles with something more urban.

"It sounds weird, but as someone who is normally drawn to the countryside I was surprised by how much I enjoyed Aberdeen – I'm not usually an urban person.

"Places like the David Welch Winter Gardens at Duthie Park were brilliant to find. It's like Kew but free, and there's a glasshouse full of cacti – I spent ages in there and that is the ethos of Slow Travel."

She also points to the 16th-century Provost Skene's House – which is "a celebration of people from north-east Scotland over time" – saying, "I probably wouldn't have looked in there if it hadn't been for the book."

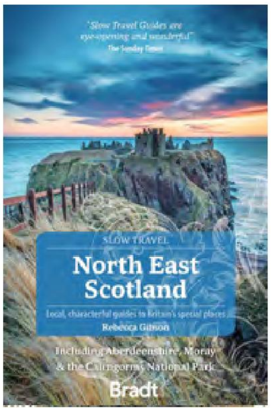
Back on the road, Rebecca was astounded by the number of Neolithic remnants in Scotland which remain virtually intact, and highlights East Aquhorthies Stone Circle near Inverurie. "It's in the middle of farmland and like other stone circles it's been there for thousands of years looking pretty much the same.

"Think of Stonehenge and how crazily busy that gets, then you have peaceful places like this – often all to yourself," she says.

She also explored the Cairngorms, but tried to avoid so-called "honeypots" where visitor numbers can be very high. "I went for a lot of early morning walks and I also decided I wanted to promote walking out of season – the Cairngorms National Park is fantastic all year round." »

David Welch Winter Gardens

Setting up a shot


'Slow Travel Guides are eye-opening and wonderful' The Sunday Times
SLOW TRAVEL
North East Scotland
Local, characterful guides to Britain's special places
Rebecca Gibson
Including Aberdeenshire, Moray & the Cairngorms National Park
Bradt

Walking is a key element of the book because Rebecca says that it "is the best way of really immersing yourself somewhere – you are travelling slowly and therefore have time to take everything in". She says, "Even better, just stop completely and soak it all up."

What also helped her choose the locations was a lifelong love of nature, which began in her Hertfordshire back garden as a child. "I can remember as a kid I would rescue worms when my mum was gardening and I would always be looking up at the birds, trying to identify them."

As she grew up Rebecca developed an interest in photography and went on to complete a BA in wildlife media at the University of Cumbria. Despite being in England, it was there that she began to be drawn to Scotland, where she would eventually make her home.

"At university I combined three things I loved – wildlife, photography and writing. At the weekend other students would go to the Lake District, but it was too busy for me. I was drawn north to Scotland instead."

After graduating, her new-found admiration for Scotland saw her move to Burghead in 2020 and, while astounded by the landscapes, she had to cope with lockdown. There was, however, a silver lining.

"I was in this new place and couldn't drive anywhere, so I explored on foot every day," she says. "That's how the book came about, because discovering new places in an immersive way is the true essence of Slow Travel."

At the time Rebecca received her commission for the book she didn't realise what she was about to embark on. But that has not dimmed her enthusiasm for writing and photographing the outdoors.

"I totted it all up and it took me a staggering 1145 hours when I included all the travel, research, writing and editing – and that was just the initial submission. It required that long because I had so much ground to cover."

Although she already had a close affinity to Scotland, and had moved to Moray, Rebecca has also found the book has strengthened her love of the country.

"I have family in Fife and visited them most summers growing up, but now Scotland is my adopted home and where I feel I belong."

Rebecca Gibson's first book – *Slow Travel: North East Scotland* – is published by Bradt Guides and is out on May 15. To explore her photography, as well as her other work, go to **www.rebeccaonthewing.com**

Pictures: ALAMY, REBECCA GIBSON

Getting Back To Nature

As an outdoor writer and photographer, Rebecca is well-placed to advise people on where to go for a great Slow Travel experience in north-east Scotland. But where does she like to go on a day off?

"There's a nature reserve, Muir of Dinnet on Deeside, which has so much in a relatively small area. It's a great example of why it's worthwhile staying in one location for a whole day.

"It has loads of different habitats – a loch with swans and ducks, open grassland which attracts butterflies, and woods where you might spot roe deer. There's also an ancient Celtic cross and the remains of Iron Age hut circles to explore.

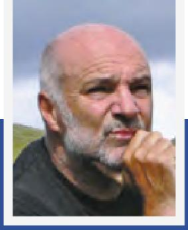
"Then, there's the Burn O' Vat, which is a narrow chasm in the rocks, covered in soggy moss and bracken. It looks like something from *Jurassic Park* and is wonderful to squeeze through.

"I arrived early one morning and had the place to myself. The granite walls echo and I made use of the excellent singing acoustics before anyone else showed up!"

Right: Celtic stone slab at Loch Kinord

Below: Burn O' Vat

Loch Kinord at the Muir of Dinnet



A Dream Come True

How a charity imagined by a Buddhist monk and set up by a Scottish climber helped to change the lives of people living in the Himalaya

THE Sherpa people of Nepal are well-known for their fortitude, but natural disasters can stretch human resilience to the limit.

On April 25, 2015, a 7.8 magnitude earthquake struck Nepal – killing almost 9000 people, injuring 22,000 more and making 3.5 million homeless.

As well as World Heritage Sites in the country's capital of Kathmandu, many mountain villages were flattened by the force of the earthquake and subsequent mudslides.

One of those villages was Langtang, a community I had visited twice. I have fond memories of lazy afternoons on the slopes above the village, listening to farmers and yaks.

Dogs barked and smoke rose into the sky from a complex tumble of huts and homes, a tremendously peaceful and uplifting scene, and one that probably hadn't changed much in centuries – a way of life perhaps lacking those things that we in the West deem to be important, but offering something much older, much wiser and certainly more timeless.

After the earthquake Langtang was changed out of all recognition. One moment it was a bustling place, full of trekkers,

tells the story behind The Little Sherpa Foundation

porters, guides, farmers and yak herders. The next it was gone. Such is the sheer power of nature.

A large glacier and a frozen lake lay on the slopes of Langtang Lirung, high above the village. The earthquake brought down much of the glacier and the entire frozen lake, gathering giant boulders in its avalanche – an estimated 40 million tons of rock and ice – which funnelled down a couloir into the village.

Only a few villagers survived – 243 people died, including 27 local guides and porters, and 41 foreign trekkers. Many villages in Nepal suffered similar losses.

Nepal received millions of pounds in aid after the earthquake, but very little reached those who needed it most. The people of these mountain regions are well used to natural disasters, like droughts and floods, but each event robs families of sons and daughters, those with the ability to earn money to support often large families.

Each disaster leaves children and the elderly even more vulnerable, and climate change will affect their lives in ways we can only begin to imagine.

Earthquakes and mudslides are commonplace in Nepal. The geology of the Himalaya is susceptible to such natural disturbances, even though those same mountains attract many thousands of climbers, mountaineers and trekkers every year.

In 2014 James Lamb, from Dunkeld in Perthshire, was trekking in the Khumbu region of Nepal. He was near the tiny settlement of Gorak Shep, less than half a day's trek from Everest Base Camp, when he heard the news that 16 Sherpas had been killed in an avalanche on Everest.

It robbed 54 children of their fathers and meant many families – who had been considered relatively prosperous because of the wages paid to mountain guides – were facing poverty.

On his descent from Gorak Shep, James met Tashi Lama, a Buddhist monk from »

Langtang Valley, Nepal

Everest Base Camp

Thyangboche Monastery, who told him that hundreds of children and elderly grandparents were in a similar situation, thrown into dire poverty because their fathers and sons had been killed working on the mountains.

He told James of a dream he had, of a charity that would help children and widows of those involved in mountain and earthquake accidents. He talked about his idea of a trekking agency employing only local people.

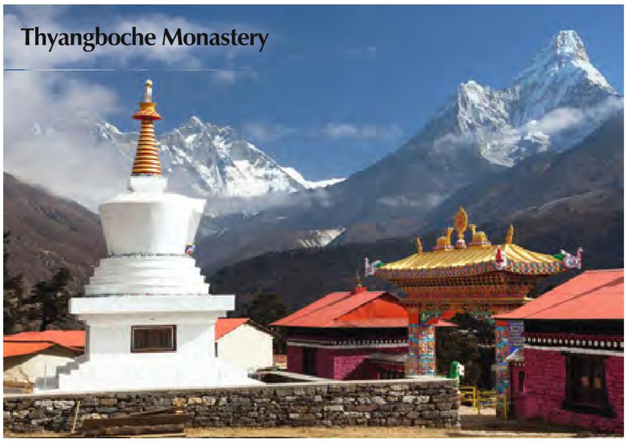
"When I heard the news of the avalanche I was appalled at the thought of how so many people would be affected," James says, "and when I went home there was all sorts of media coverage. Climbing stopped on Everest."

In the immediate aftermath James felt guilty because he had gone home, his life unchanged – so he contacted Tashi Lama and suggested setting up a charity and trekking agency, to help turn Tashi's dream into reality.

With no background in charity work – he and his wife were retired teachers – the learning curve turned out to be as steep as the slopes of Everest. They called their charity The Little Sherpa Foundation.

DID YOU KNOW?

Tenzing Norgay, or "Sherpa Tenzing" as he was known, was one of the first two people known to reach the summit of Mount Everest, with Sir Edmund Hillary on May 29, 1953.



Thyangboche Monastery

"We learned on the hoof, asking all sorts of people for help. Six months later we had a website for a trekking agency and had registered as a charity. Shortly afterwards we had trekkers signed up and held our first fundraising event at the Everest Inn restaurant in Blackheath, London, where one of our guests was the Nepali ambassador.

"We raised a huge amount of money but, more importantly, the event raised awareness."

Richard Else, from The Adventure Show Production Company, attended that event and agreed to travel to Nepal with James to make a film about the charity.

It was broadcast on BBC Scotland and shown at mountain film festivals around the world. The film raised even more awareness of the plight of Sherpa families, as well as the ongoing work of the new charity.

"The film – *Sherpas Speak* – provides a voice for their

Sherpas after the 2015 earthquake

Gorak Shep

> *"The learning curve was as steep as Everest"*

concerns, as many feel that their traditional way of life is under threat," James says.

"By sharing stories and experiences of those living and working in the area, our aim is to inform, educate and inspire the wider world about these mountain people in a way that sustains their way of life in the modern world."

The Little Sherpa Foundation often works closely with the late Doug Scott's charity, Community Action Nepal, and a charity founded by Sir Edmund Hillary in 1960, Himalayan Trust.

The partnership has built nursery schools and helped repair the Edmund Hillary School in Khumjung, as well as rebuilding other schools, a health clinic and homes that were destroyed in the 2015 earthquakes.

Building schools, hospitals, health centres and even monasteries is common to all the charities, but little can be done unless sufficient money is raised.

"If our trajectory continues, within the next year we'll have raised our first million dollars," James says.

"It's something I'm immensely proud of – bearing in mind the charity is virtually just my wife and myself.

"Rotary have come on board with real enthusiasm and have raised a lot of money. The financial support of Inverkeithing & Dalgety Bay Rotary Club, partnered with Durham Rotary, has enabled us to build a school and health clinic, and take running water and sanitation to the village of Phortse in the Khumbu region, helping nearly 500 people. For my work, Rotary made me a Paul Harris Fellow – a prestigious award for a non-Rotarian."

While earthquake-resistant building work is vitally important, as a former teacher James is keen to help the young people of the Sherpa community.

"We give scholarships to Sherpa children," he says. "Although education is free in Nepal there are things – like uniforms, PE kit, computers and books – that are not included. We have about 50 primary school pupils we look after on an ongoing basis.

"We also have scholarships for secondary school kids – many travel a long way to the Edmund Hillary School »

Tashi Lama

Above: Edmund Hillary School

Right: Porters in the Himalaya

in Khumjung and have to pay for accommodation and food at school.

"We've also been sending Sherpa students to Kathmandu University – we're training people to be teachers, nurses and engineers with an agreement that they will return to their local community after training.

"We have a committee of seven local people from the Khumbu district who make these decisions."

The charity also employs Sherpa teachers – any teachers employed by the Nepalese government are not necessarily Sherpa. Many don't speak the language or know much about the culture, the songs, the dance, the folklore – things that sustain indigenous cultures.

Much of this resonates strongly with James – as a staunch supporter of the Gaelic language, he is equally enthusiastic about protecting the Sherpa culture.

On the project he has enjoyed working on the most, James says, "The building of a health clinic in Phortse, Tashi Lama's home village, was very special.

"There had been no clinic for four years. People had a round-trip of five hours to seek medical advice.

"We built the clinic to a standard approved by the Nepali government, which led to a full-time nurse being employed, as well as a visiting doctor one day a week, and all the necessary medicines being provided free!

"Another project I'm proud of is taking running water and sanitation to the village – people spent an hour walking downhill to collect water and an hour back uphill, just for enough water for a day.

"People told me about things they'd seen in Kathmandu – water from a tap and electricity from a switch. Things we take for granted have been life-changing for villages like Phortse and will help people to stay in the area rather than moving to cities."

A forthcoming event that really excites James is the charity's new role as organiser of the world-famous Everest Marathon. Pre-pandemic this was an annual event in which athletes trekked to Everest Base Camp and then raced back to the Sherpa village of Namche Bazaar.

James jokingly challenged me to take part in the event.

Now, I'm no runner, but I know someone who is – a world-famous, mountain-loving celebrity who has already competed in marathons and is desperate to visit Nepal.

Last November, when I hosted the launch of actor Sam Heughan's autobiography, *Waypoints*, I challenged him to take part in this year's Everest Marathon.

He tentatively agreed, in front of 1000 witnesses!

So the *Outlander* star might well be bound for Kathmandu this year. It will be a massive opportunity to further the name and reputation of The Little Sherpa Foundation, an opportunity that is richly deserved.

Cameron McNeish is patron of The Little Sherpa Foundation.

FASCINATING FACTS

The Sherpa are one of the Tibetan ethnic groups native to the most mountainous regions of Nepal.

"Sherpa" derives from "shar", meaning "east", and "pa" for "people", referring to the geographical origin of eastern Tibet.

The historic Tibetan name for Mount Everest is Chomolungma, meaning "Goddess Mother of the World".

Pictures: ALAMY, REX/SHUTTERSTOCK

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Four Fast Friends

The determined team tackling the challenging Moray Way 100 Relay

by FIONA RUSSELL

Running on a boardwalk

IT'S a warm afternoon as I take up my starting position in Lossiemouth – to my right is a long, wide beach and the sun dazzles on the waters of the Moray Firth.

It would be nice to pop into one of several ice cream shops, but that's not why I'm visiting this popular coastal town in Moray Speyside.

There, running towards me along the esplanade, is my friend Claire. After a quick hug, she hands me a GPS tracker – and urges me to run away.

It's now my turn to take up the baton as part of a 161-kilometre (100 mile) running challenge and I cross a footbridge, head into grassy dunes and then strike out along the sand towards the village of Garmouth.

It's not easy running on the beach and the more compact sand closest to the lapping sea offers the best surface – but I end up with wet feet, even while trying to dodge the waves.

After a couple of kilometres, sand gives way to ankle-turning shingle before the incoming tide pushes me inland and over a high ridge of pebbles to reach a narrow path that winds through a carpet of dry, short grass. While the heat rises in the sheltered hollow between dunes and woodland, the terrain is much easier to run on and I'm able to relax and stretch out my stride.

toptip
Don't forget lights and reflective gear for any stages run after dark.

Fiona and her team

At a wooden waymarker, the arrow points me south. The path leads to a wide, dusty track then on to a tarmac road and, after an hour of solo running, I'm delighted to see Claire again, as well as two more friends, Cath and Kate, waiting for me at the next checkpoint.

It's now my turn to hand the tracker to Cath – and tell her to get going!

The aim of our four-person team – Fi's Flanci Fillies – is to complete the Moray Way 100 Relay.

Already Kate has run 10km (six miles) from the inland town of Forres – the start and finish of the challenge – to Findhorn on the Moray coast, before Cath ran 11.2km (seven miles) along the shore to Burghead. She handed over to Claire, who ran further eastwards through several former fishing villages to reach Lossiemouth and me.

In total, our team has 12 stages of between 4.8km (three miles) and 24km (15 miles) to complete, with each relay runner completing three sections.

Lossiemouth East Beach

A rest by the sea

Kit List

- **Trail running footwear**
- **Running clothes**
- **Running pack**

Mandatory Kit

- **Emergency foil blanket**
- **Waterproof jacket and trousers**
- **Warm baselayer**
- **Headtorch**
- **Mobile phone**
- **Hat and gloves**
- **Minimum of 500ml of liquid**
- **Emergency food**
- **Personal first aid kit (bandage/plasters)**
- **GPS tracker**

Between Running Stages

- **Change of clothes**
- **Insulated jacket**
- **Food and water**

> *“At first, the trails seem fairytale magical”*

The circular route takes us along several long-distance walking trails, including two-thirds of the 80km (50 miles) Moray Coast Trail, half of the 105km (66 miles) Speyside Way and the full Dava Way at 38km (24 miles).

We encounter a range of terrain, from tarmac to beaches, tracks through forests and trails over rolling hills.

While one of us is running, the other three drive in a hired motorhome between checkpoints on a unique tour that links together many attractive villages and towns, and journeys through ever-changing landscapes.

We fuel up on ice creams from Fochabers Ice Cream Parlour, chips from Aberlour Takeaway and The Royal Fish Bar in Grantown, plus a vast supply of snacks.

We fill our time between each running stage with chat and laughter among ourselves, and with other teams.

My next stage of the relay – the seventh of the dozen – starts at Aberlour and takes me three miles to Carron on a delightfully flat path along an old railway line. Winding its way below me is a beautiful river, edged by pretty woodland and wild plants.

But by far the most scenic stage that I run – and also the longest at 23km (14.5 miles) and the hilliest – is the ninth, from Ballindalloch to Grantown-on-Spey. By the time I set off, having again taken the tracker from Claire, the sun is starting to set.

The first few miles travel through quiet countryside, »

Following the waymarkers

THE SPEYSIDE WAY

Fi's Flanci Fillies

Stay

- Tullochwood Lodges, Rafford. **tullochwoodlodges.com**
- Motorhome from Highland Campervans, Dalcross, Inverness. **www.highlandcampervans.com**

Eat

- Hamper and pre-cooked evening meal from Brodie Countryfare, near Forres. **www.brodiecountryfare.com**
- Breakfast at Cafe 1496, Forres. **www.cafe1496.co.uk**
- Dinner at Mosset Tavern, Forres. **mossettavern.co.uk**

Get Ready

- The next Moray Way 100, for solo runners, and Moray Way 100 Relay for teams of four is on June 24. Visit **www.moraywayultras.com/moray-way-100**/ to find out more and enter.

interspersed by sections of wooden boardwalk and giant stepping stones, on the south side of the River Spey.

Just as I am wondering where all the hills are, I meet my first – and climb up and up.

Over several miles I ascend towards a high of 304 metres (1000 feet), then descend to around 244m (800ft), then climb again to 335m (1100ft). Over the following five miles, the pattern is repeated over and again as I face several more hills of heights of between 228m (750ft) and 270m (885ft).

The constant up and down is very fatiguing and I slow many times to a brisk walk, especially on steep gradients. At times, the trail is too technical to do anything more than pick my way gingerly forwards.

But as I resign myself to a slower pace – worrying that my teammates will be questioning why the tracker dot is progressing at a snail's pace – I also remind myself that I am fortunate to be surrounded by such gorgeous scenery.

As I make my way south, I watch as the sky turns from pink to orangey-red over a patchwork of lush green hills, fields and forest.

I am grateful, too, when I reach a more runnable section as I pass through the former railway station of Cromdale. The track that once took trains on the Strathspey railway line is now a grassy path.

At the outskirts of Grantown-on-Spey, I run into the darkness of community woodland and need to switch on my headtorch. At first, the trails seem fairytale magical, lit by my single beam of light, but then I trip over a tree root and land flat out and face down in vegetation.

Fortunately, I do no major damage but, as I pick myself up with bloody knees and elbows, I suddenly feel drained. It is a struggle to finish my stage, but I'm relieved to hear my friends cheering me on in Grantown.

Cath, Kate and Claire take the tracker over the next three stages and, after a total of 16 hours and 28 minutes of running, our team crosses the finish line back in Forres.

We're surprised, but delighted, to discover we're the third team overall. We also win the Masters (over-40s) race. The first relay team home was the Newburgh Dunes Running Club in an impressive 14 hours and 22 minutes. There is also a solo running race and, amazingly, the first runner finished in 17 hours, 16 minutes.

It turns out that running 161km – 100 miles – non-stop is a great challenge if you have friends to share the very long journey. Ⓢ

Pictures: FIONA RUSSELL

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Ben faces Beinn Bhàn

In High Spirits

Exploring an alternative route to the impressive summit of Beinn Bhàn

by FIONA RUSSELL

BEINN BHÀN is an impressive sight from a popular tourist road in north-west Scotland.

Yet, as I discover during a rewarding walk, this mountain's summit appears surprisingly less visited.

The adventure with my friend Ben begins close to the base of the Bealach na Bà, an iconic pass on the famous North Coast 500.

While traffic passes almost constantly on the single track road, we are very quickly immersed in a peaceful and wonderfully wild landscape.

At first, there is a well-trodden path along the western bank of the River Kishorn. Its gentle incline lulls us into a relaxed pace as we enjoy sunshine and increasingly spectacular views of the high cliffs, buttresses and sandstone amphitheatres that form the eastern flanks of the mountain ridge.

Then, as we meet a junction and veer north-west, the slope steepens and the terrain becomes more rugged.

The trail fades and returns, then fades again, until we decide to simply follow a compass bearing towards Coire an Fhamair, at the northern end of the ridge.

Arriving at a beautiful lochan at 365 metres (1200 feet) elevation, we can see more clearly that the ascent of the corrie is going to be a muscle-punishing affair.

At first, it's quite steep, and then from around 579m (1900ft) elevation it's seriously steep.

For the final 198m (650ft), Ben and I set our own paces. There is a faint zigzag sheep path on the grassy slope and this helps to ease the incline a little.

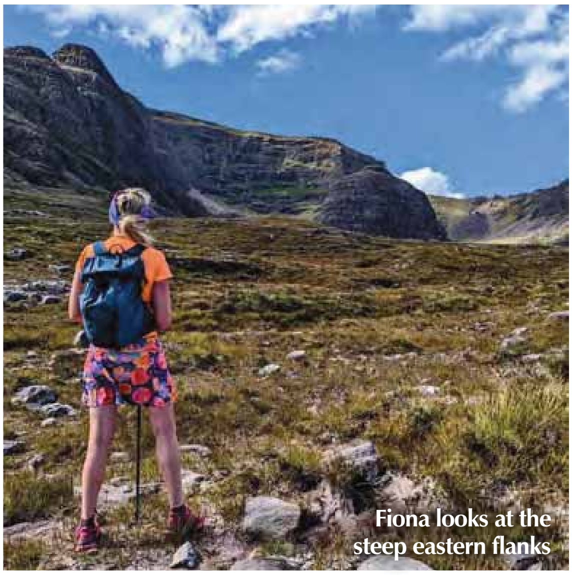
A final push uphill takes me over the ridge edge and on to a wide and much flatter top. While I wait for Ben to catch up, I walk west and take in a magnificent view over the sea to numerous islands – including Skye, Raasay, Rum and the Outer Hebrides.

After a rest for a snack and to enjoy the vista, Ben and I continue south along the ridge and carefully peer down at another dramatic corrie, Coire na Poite, and two lochans far below.

toptip

An ascent of Beinn Bhàn can be combined with climbing Sgùrr a' Chaorachain.

The flat ridge top



Fiona looks at the steep eastern flanks

Some people ascend this route, but we're happy we made an alternative choice.

We soon reach the summit at 896m (2940ft) – Beinn Bhàn is categorised as a Corbett – where there is a stone shelter and trig point. Here, we meet the only other people we see all day.

This couple have chosen to ascend from higher up the Bealach na Bà and plan to return the same way, missing what Ben and I believe to be the best part of the walk – the superb eastern corries.

As well as the sublime coastal views, we can see the many high peaks of the Torridon area to the east.

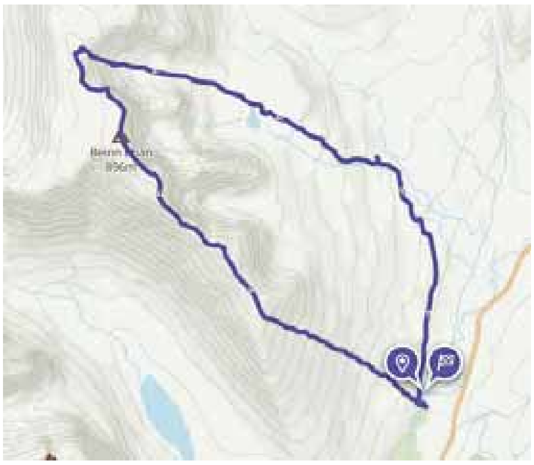
We're keen to complete a circuit, so we continue south-easterly, descending on a rough and grassy slope.

To our right, we see Loch Coire nan Arr below and the imposing flanks of another Corbett, Sgùrr a' Chaorachain, as well as a climbing route known as Cìoch Nose. The vehicles look tiny on the Bealach na Bà.

The final section downhill to the car is the roughest of the walk, but we are soon out of our walking boots and making our way to the nearest shop for an ice cream. Ⓢ

Factfile

- **Start and finish:** Layby on a minor road, soon after the Applecross turn-off from the A89, just before a bridge over the River Kishorn.
- **Distance:** 13.6 kilometres (8.5 miles)
- **Total elevation:** 948m (3110 ft)
- **Highest point:** 896m (2940ft)
- **Time:** Five hours
- **Route:** bit.ly/3J6tsB9 (anti-clockwise)



Give It A Go

There are several different routes for Beinn Bhàn (Applecross). See **www.walkhighlands.co.uk**, as well as the Scottish Mountaineering Club book ***The Corbetts*** and Cicerone's ***Walking The Corbetts Volume 2 – North Of The Great Glen***.

Pictures: FIONA RUSSELL

Gear Guide

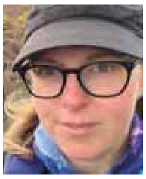
We put the latest outdoor clothing and equipment to the test

1. Keela Gaiters, £34.95

Katrina Patrick

NO matter the weather or season – when hiking in the UK, gaiters are your friends. In summer, they keep midges, ticks and other beasties away when wading through long grass. On wetter days, they stop rain and mud from soaking into trouser hems, and in winter they'll prevent snow getting in your boots. You can get cheaper basic gaiters, but it's worth paying that little bit extra for pre-formed ones like these that fit snugly round your calves – or you'll spend all day pulling them back up! They're waterproof and breathable, with reinforced rip-stop ankle patches for rougher scrambling.

2. Vango Thermo Bottle 500ml, £13



Catriona Thomson

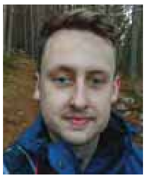
THIS double vacuum stainless steel thermo-bottle boasts a one-handed operating system, so it's easy to open if you're out and about. You don't have to worry about leaks, though – the integrated locking mechanism keeps liquids secure and leak-free while it's in your bag. Vango say the flask can retain heat for 24 hours, keeping liquids warm. On my test, by 24 hours my black tea – which started off boiling hot – was cool, but I reckon it'd be drinkably warm up to around 12 hours. At 300g empty, the flask is fairly light, and it's made from BPA-free plastic. The spout is easy and comfy to drink from, too.

3. Berghaus MTN Arete LB Synthetic Hoody, £170

Robert Wight

IT'S a fantastically versatile midlayer, with probably the best weight-to-warmth ratio I've tried. The hoody is reversible, with one side being windproof, while the other is more breathable – so when you stop for a snack, whip it off and turn it inside out, and you stay snug! The men's medium weighs just 230g and I can pack it down to hold in a single fist. The synthetic fill stays warm when damp, and it dries out very quickly. The hood is worn under the helmet and high-set side pockets work with a harness or pack waist strap. If it's really cold, you'll need more layers, but it truly is hard to fault.

4. Whitby KENT EDC Pocket Knife, £19.95



Zak Kennedy

THE Whitby pocket knife is compact in size, but both the blade and the handle are made with thick durable metal that feels well put-together, giving plenty of confidence that it's not going to fall apart when you need it most. The spring in the handle feels strong and durable, so you shouldn't have to worry about the blade accidentally piercing a hole in your favourite hiking bag. It also feels and sounds satisfying when it snaps back into place. Testing out the blade's sharpness, it made light work of all the different materials I could get my hands on. A solid addition to any camping gear or key chain.

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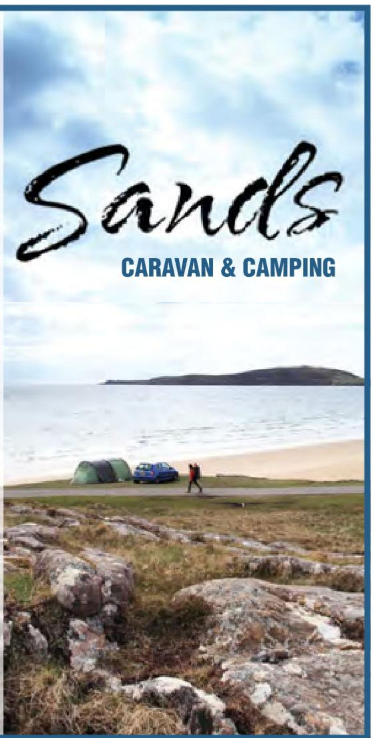

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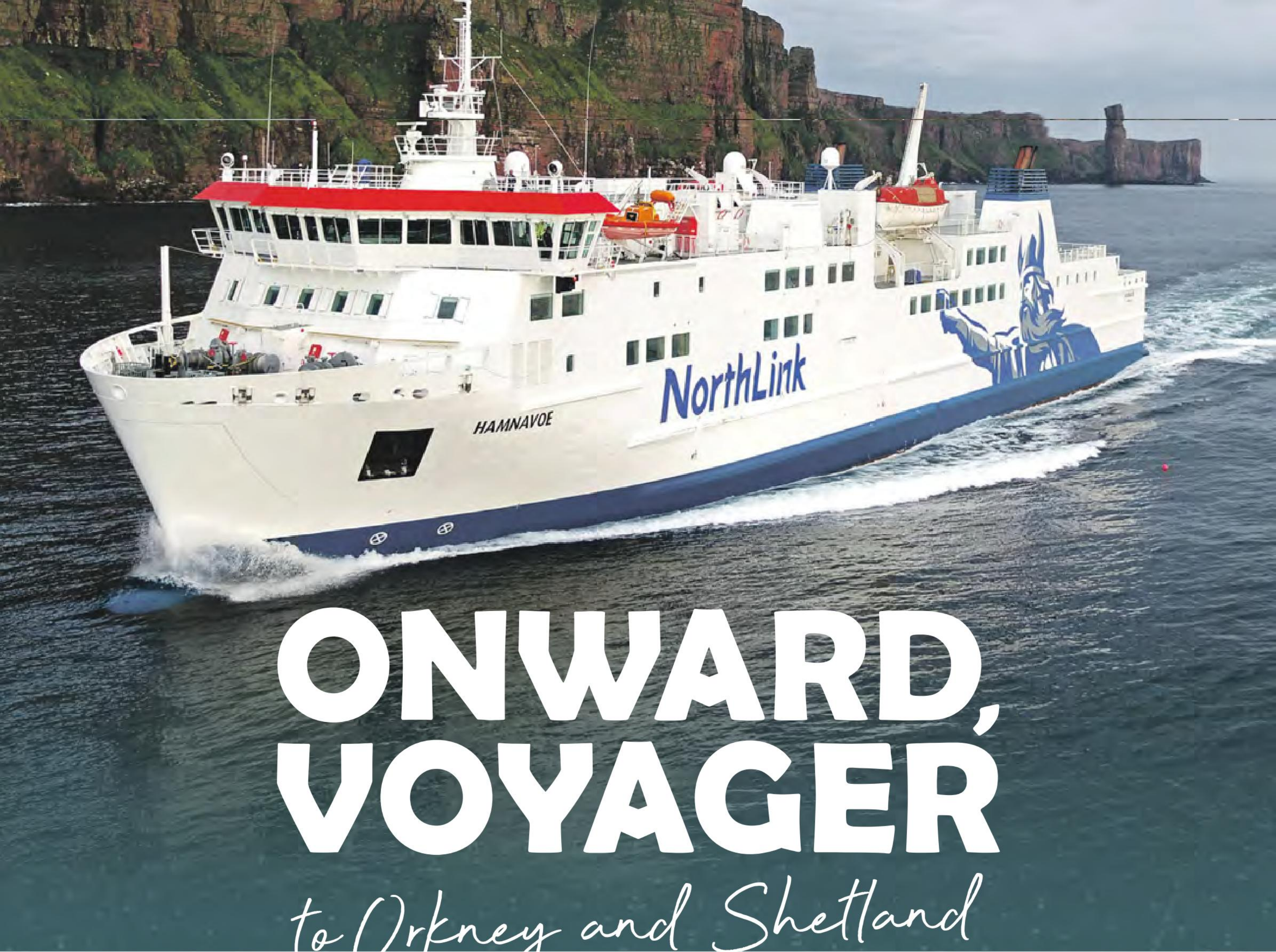
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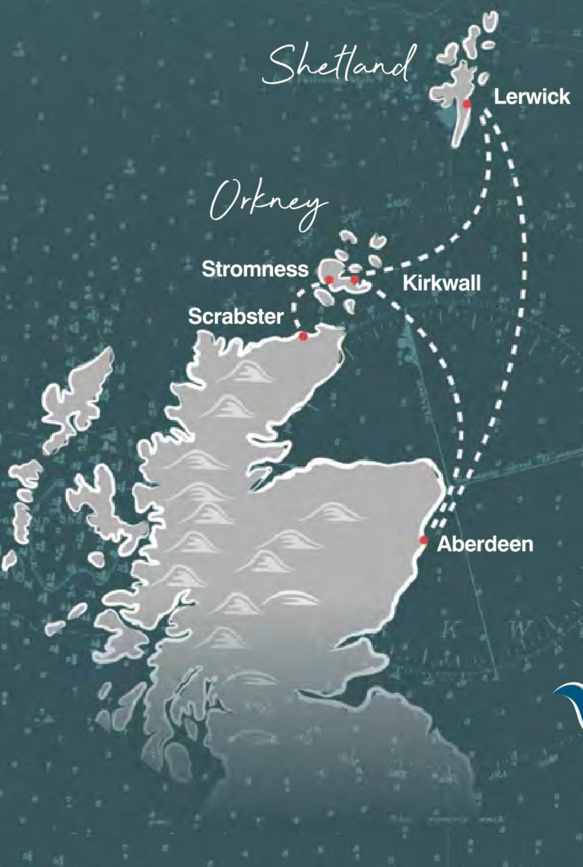
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Forging Of Unions

Scots soldier James Thompson Bain emigrated to South Africa, but found his life's work in the country's fledgling Labour movement

by KENNY MacASKILL

EXCEPTING missionaries and explorers, tales of Scots in Southern Africa are few and far between.

Perhaps, as a historian once humorously told me, emigration there was rare until the modern period, other than those voyaging to the Antipodes who jumped ship at the Cape, unwilling to sail any further.

But there was one Scot who emigrated to South Africa in the late 19th century, becoming active in the country's Labour movement.

The African National Congress (ANC) is sometimes seen as the face of radicalism in South Africa. But for a while – before Apartheid – there was the "Colonial Left".

It held attitudes towards the majority population that would rightly not be countenanced today. However, it has to be seen in the context of the time and there is a story to be told about a prominent Scot.

James Thompson Bain, the son of Andrew Bain and Eliza Thompson, was born into poverty in Dundee on March 6, 1860. Enlisting in the army at 16, in 1878 he found himself in Pretoria, the capital of the Transvaal, annexed by the British Empire the year before.

He served in the Zulu War before being posted to India, where he was stationed from 1880 until 1882.

For so many, military life was a route out of poverty and unemployment, aided no doubt by the opportunity for travel – but it was not for him. Returning to Scotland, Bain trained to become a skilled engineer.

Politics and trade unionism, however, were his life's work. Becoming active in the then fledgling Labour movement, he joined the Scottish Land and Labour League, meeting with the likes of William Morris, a doyen of British and European socialism.

However, in 1890, he returned to South Africa. It's not known what took him back – whether it was poor conditions in Scotland or the hope of better opportunities in another land. Off he went, as did so many other Scots,

"*His loyalty was to his new country*"

Johannesburg

initially living in Cape Town before moving further north and settling in the Transvaal, which had regained its independence as the South African Republic.

Johannesburg, where he made his new home, had become a major mining centre following the discovery of gold – and it was there that he quickly found work.

As in Scotland, his real drivers lay elsewhere, and his commitment and experience were no doubt welcomed by his new comrades – he quickly became a trade union organiser among white immigrant employees there.

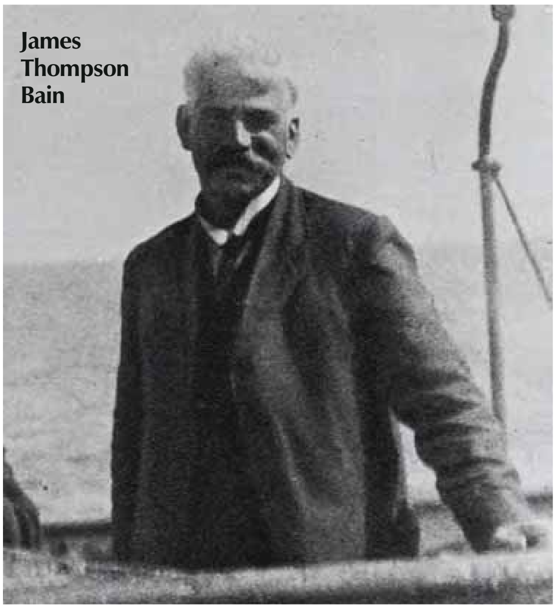
In 1892 he helped found the first major union on the Rand, the Witwatersrand Mine Employees and Mechanics Union. They pursued not just workers' rights, but the franchise for white immigrants into the Transvaal.

Power was retained by the Boer burghers and the extension of voting to immigrants caused concern.

Worse still, equality across races was still shamefully rejected by much of mainstream socialism. South African activists were linked into the global movement. However, it was still the age of empire and, even if the evils of Apartheid weren't advocated, racism was everywhere.

Bain was active outwith his work and union affairs, being a journalist and then editor of a socialist newspaper, the *Johannesburg Witness*. He was a prominent player in the Johannesburg Trades Council, formed in 1893.

Intriguingly, this was in addition to acting as a spy for the Intelligence Service of the South African or Transvaal Government under President Paul Kruger. Presumably, it had more to do with Bain monitoring the British than undermining the socialist cause he was committed to. »

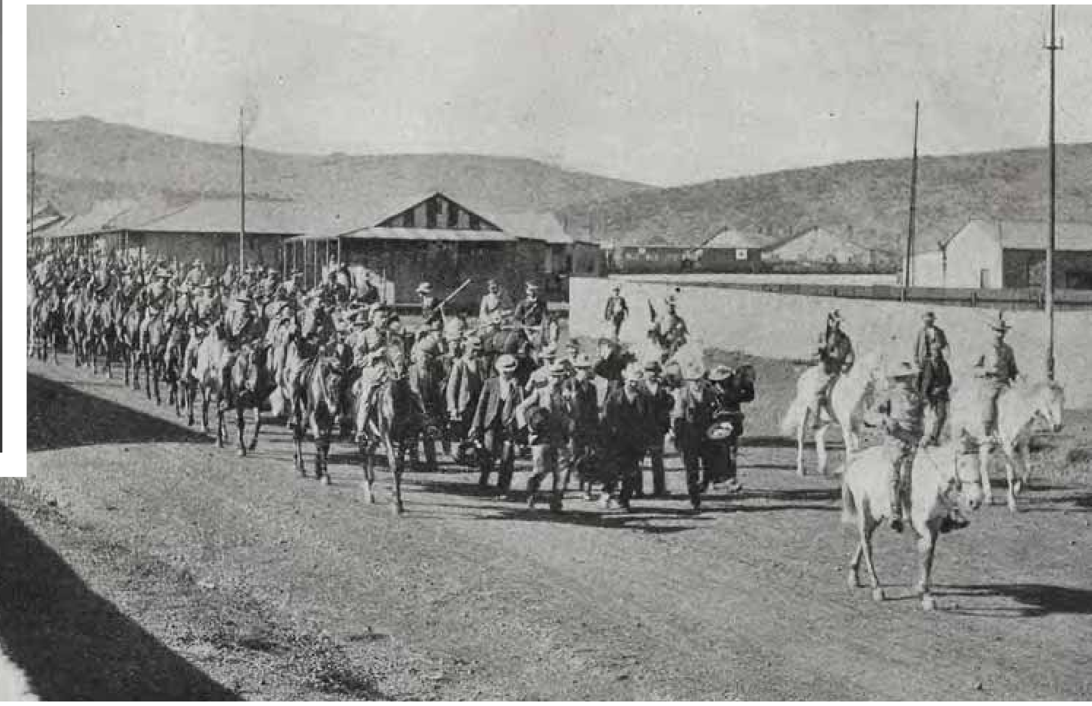

James Thompson Bain

FASCINATING FACTS

The Zulu War lasted from January to July 1879.

Welfare campaigner, anti-war activist and pacifist Emily Hobhouse campaigned for improvement to the appalling conditions of the Boer concentration camps.

The Apartheid system of institutionalised racial segregation existed from 1948 to 1994.



Above: Paul Kruger

Right: Prisoners during the Second Boer War

"Military life was a route out of poverty"

Although Bain was born a British citizen and served in the British Army, he was neither a fan of Queen Victoria nor felt any allegiance to his former homeland – his loyalty was to his new country, shown by his actions when the Second Boer War broke out in October 1899.

Joining the Transvaal forces, he confronted the army in which he'd once served, fighting instead for the independence of his new land.

It was a bitter conflict even if Bain's service was short. When Johannesburg fell under a British Army onslaught in July 1900, he was taken prisoner.

Disgraceful British behaviour during the war is well-recorded, with the incarceration of Boer civilians in concentration camps leading to many thousands of deaths.

But Bain was to be fortunate in his treatment from his former comrades as he was classified as a naturalised South African and held as a prisoner of war, thus avoiding charges of treason – though it appears that consideration was given to viewing him in that manner. A treason charge would have led to execution.

Instead, Bain was imprisoned in Johannesburg before being transferred with other Boer prisoners to detention in Ceylon. Following peace being declared in 1902, he was freed, returning to Johannesburg the following year.

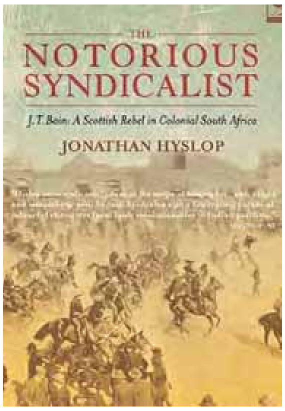
Whether through keeping his head down in a post-war society or through exhaustion, he was quiet for some time. However, after a few years he returned to the fray, becoming president of the Transvaal Independent Labour Party.

Continuing to work in the mines, he became a full-time organiser and, in 1913, was involved in the miners' strike which erupted into a general strike of white workers. As with the British General Strike just over a decade later, it was crushed and Bain – along with other many others – was deported to Britain.

Returning to South Africa again the following year, the First World War had broken out and the South African socialist movement was as divided over it as their European comrades were.

Bain opposed the war and was frustrated by the split it caused within the movement. Siding with the left, however, he was involved in a strike in 1919, which briefly saw a Johannesburg "Soviet" established. But it soon faded, as did he, dying on October 29 that year.

Jonathan Hyslop's *The Notorious Syndicalist – JT Bain: A Scottish Rebel In Colonial South Africa* paints a portrait of a fascinating man at time when, sadly, even socialism was for whites only. Ⓢ



Jonathan Hyslop's book on Bain

Pictures: ALAMY, REX/SHUTTERSTOCK

Scotland The Brand

A Sweet Dream

Border's plan was simple – bake the tastiest biscuits

BORDER
6 DARK CHOCOLATE GINGER BARS
LEMON DRIZZLE MELTS
DARK CHOCOLATE GINGER
DARK CHOCOLATE ORANGE
CRAFTED WITH CARE

Border biscuits

WHETHER it's to alleviate the stress of a busy day in the office or a treat at home, there will be plenty of takers when you crack open a packet of Border biscuits!

In 1984, John Cunningham bought a tiny factory in the small Scottish town of Lanark – his dream was to create the tastiest biscuits imaginable.

His plan was simple. Prioritising the quality of the product, he believed that if they were tasty enough to share with others, demand would naturally grow.

Word spread and Border launched its brand-new range of speciality biscuits on to the market in 1989. It included brand staples such as Viennese Whirls, Chocolate Crumbles and Dark Chocolate Gingers – voted the nation's favourite dark chocolate ginger biscuit in 2015.

In fact, by 2015, the Scottish firm had produced more than 20 million delicious Dark Chocolate Gingers, using a whopping 155 tonnes of chocolate.

Today, the family bakery is Scotland's top premium biscuit brand. And with 11 flavours to choose from, plus a range of biscuit bars and minipacks for those on the go, we're spoiled for choice.

Some newer additions include Dark Chocolate Orange, Lemon Drizzle Melts, Butterscotch Crunch, Shortbread Rings, Chocolate Cookies and Sultana Melts.

Lanark has remained home to Border biscuits and the firm believes care is a key ingredient. Every year, the company donates 10% of its profits to the local community through its charity Border Community Support, as well as 10% of its annual profits to permanent staff.

Border Community Support was established in 2007 and previous projects include sprucing up the environment, partnering with schools to promote learning and supporting town events.

By February 2021, Border had donated £1 million to local groups and organisations. Ⓢ

> *"Care is a key ingredient"*

Words: HANNAH McLAREN Pictures: ALAMY, ALAN PEEBLES

1984
John Cunningham, right, opens his factory in Lanark.

1989
The first official range of Border biscuits is launched.

1996
The company expands its premises.

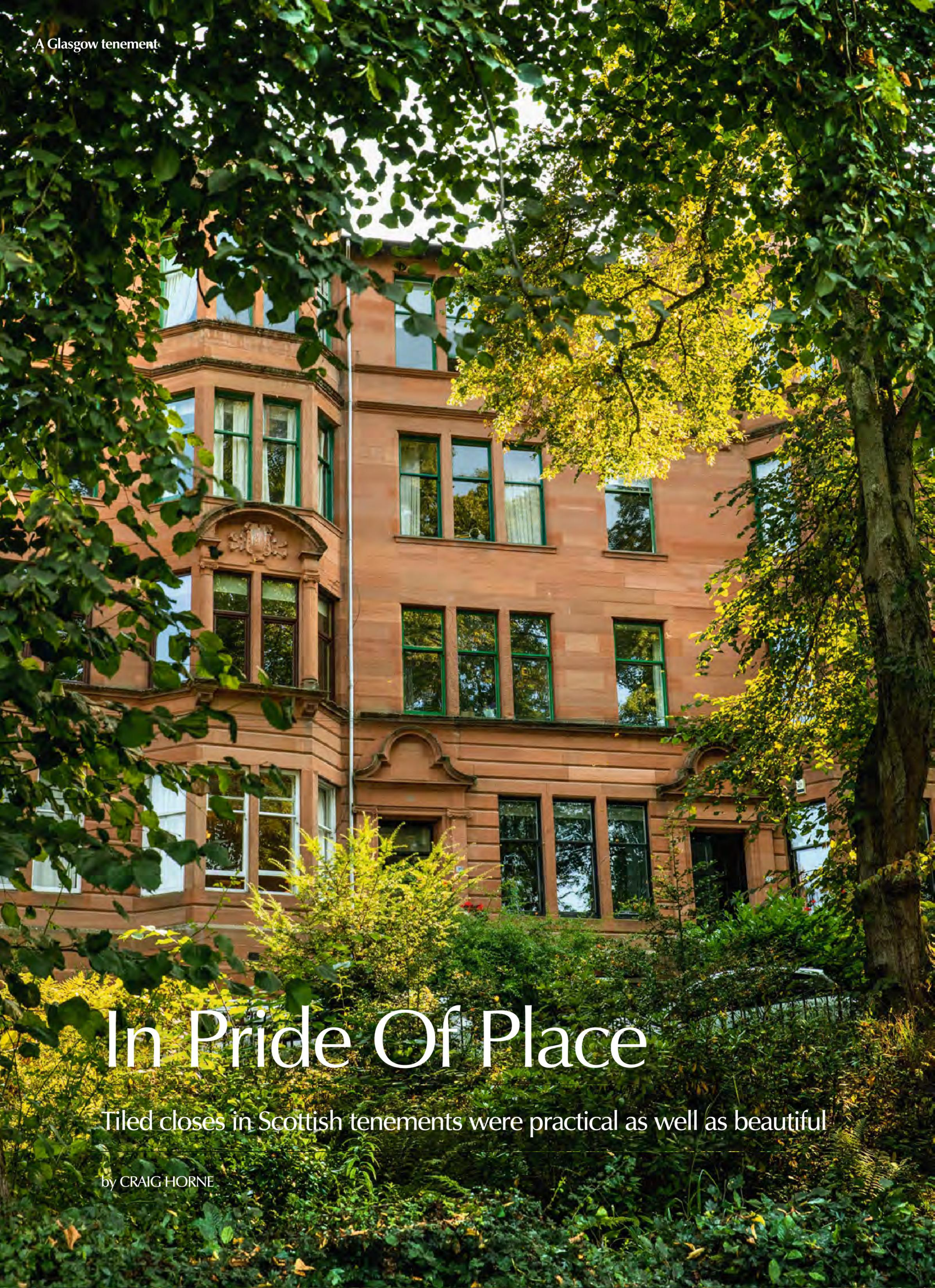
2013
Global demand grows and production reaches 300,000 packets a week.

2015
Border Dark Chocolate Gingers top a poll of favourite biscuits.

2019
The firm commits to using 90% less plastic in packaging.

2021
£1 million has been donated to local causes by Border Community Support.

2022
Thanks to growing popularity, the firm redesigns all of its packaging.

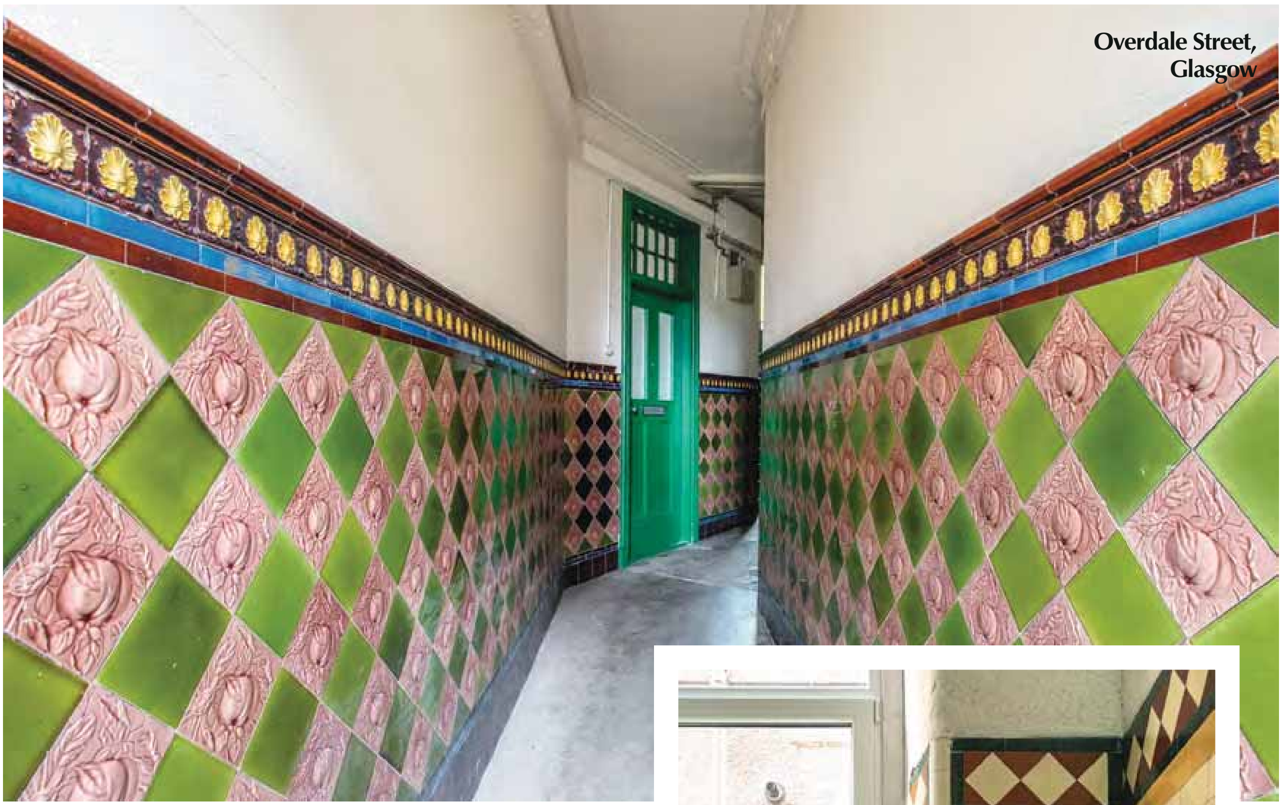


A Glasgow tenement

In Pride Of Place

Tiled closes in Scottish tenements were practical as well as beautiful

by CRAIG HORNE



Overdale Street, Glasgow

OPENING the door of a tenement building, you could be met by the most exquisite tiled interior – with everything from geometric designs to fantastic floral patterns enticing you in.

"For me, it's an amazing ceramic public art collection," says Danny Callaghan of Ceramic City Stories.

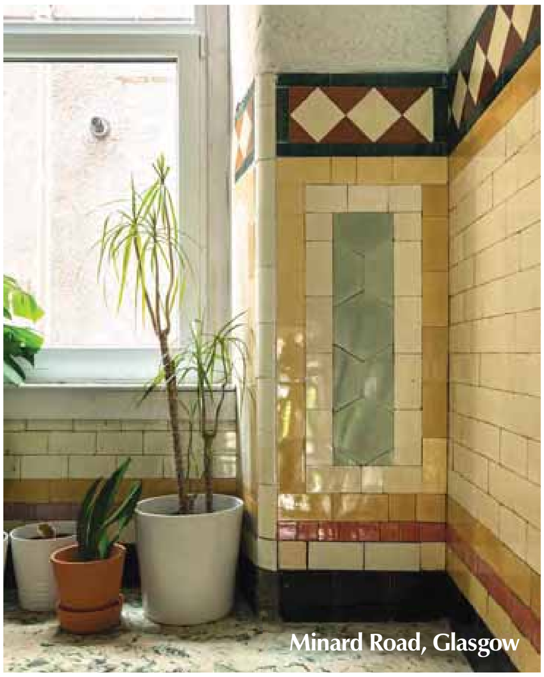
Business owners were behind many of the tenements that sprung up in the 19th and early 20th centuries. It was in their interests to provide an appealing shared space that would attract workers to their factories.

Tiles provided hygienic, low-maintenance surfaces, and adding decoration instilled a sense of pride in tenants. These tiled tenements were traditionally more popular than plain, painted ones.

Danny, an artist from Stoke-on-Trent – where many tiles that adorn closes originated – says, "They are extremely hygienic, they're easy to clean and keep clean so they're very often used in canteen spaces. I'm talking historically, as well as contemporary – they are used for public swimming baths, for example.

"With decorative tiles, I guess the reason for using them – as well as that practicality – was about different levels of prestige, the entrance to a building being something that people do see.

"Their use seems to correlate with the use of tiles in lots of different contexts, where it is about making something distinctive and also giving added value."

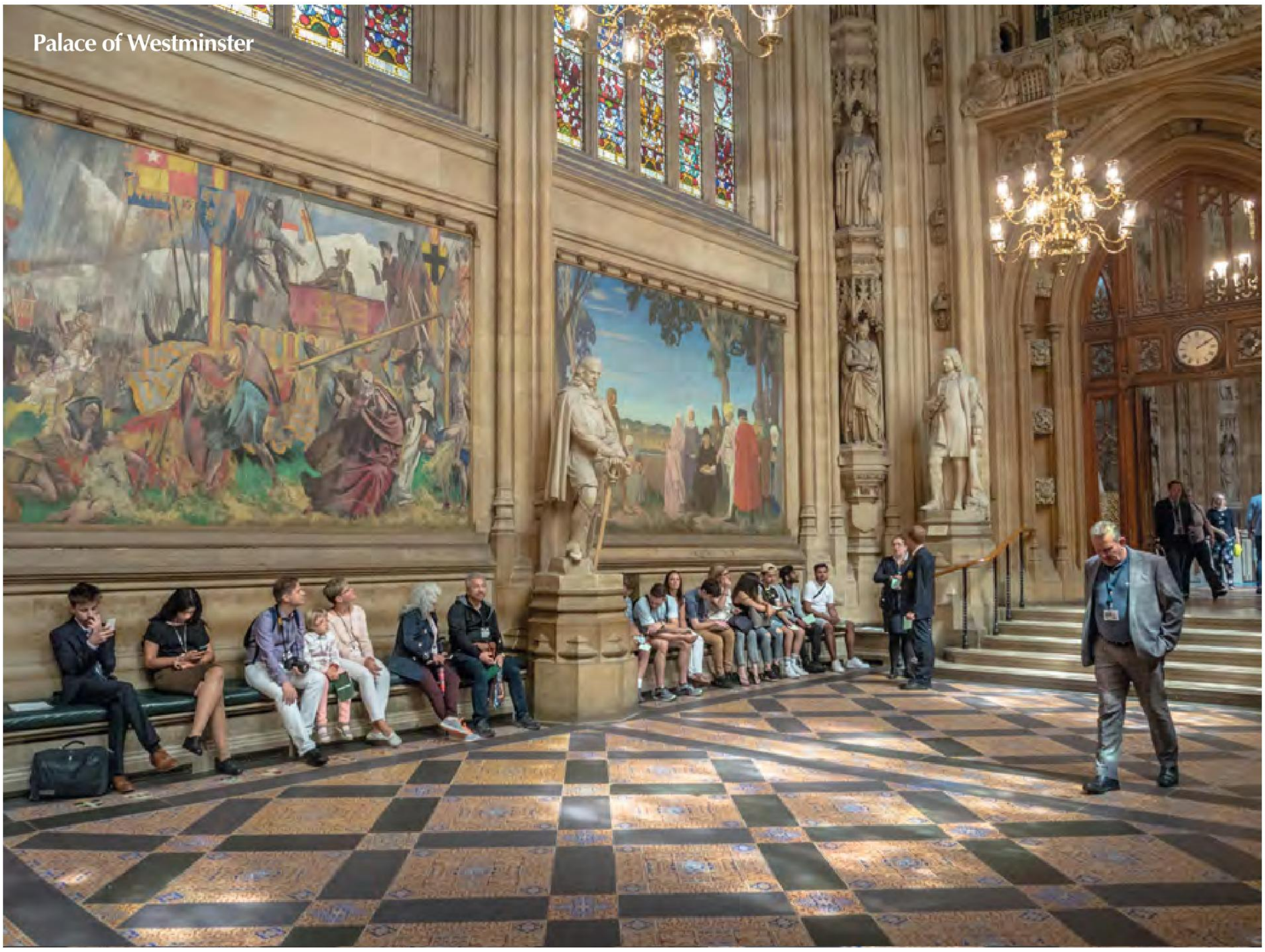


Minard Road, Glasgow

In Glasgow, such tenements were known colloquially as "wally closes" – the word "wally" was traditionally used for something made of white china. Notable examples of such closes are also to be found in Scottish cities such as Edinburgh and Dundee.

Three main artistic movements shaped the craft in the 19th century – Gothic Revival, the Aesthetic Movement and the influence of Morris & Co.

The partnership of the Gothic Revivalist Augustus Pugin and the industrial potter Herbert Minton was particularly fruitful. »



Palace of Westminster

“It’s an amazing public art collection”

Pugin played a key role in encouraging Minton to develop the first block-printed tiles for use as interior wall decorations.

“People might know Minton tiles or Minton Hollins tiles,” Danny says. “Minton tiles are the kind that you’ll get on doorsteps or in hallways. Of the more famous ones, there’s about 300,000 of them on the floors of the Palace of Westminster down in London. You’ll also find them in the Capitol Building in Washington, DC.”

The Aesthetic Movement figure John Moyr Smith produced a wide range of designs for Minton, which have been found around Glasgow, as have those from William de Morgan, a frequent collaborator with William Morris.

“Glasgow had a significant pottery industry that had massive connections with Stoke-on-Trent,” Danny says.

“A lot of Stoke-on-Trent people emigrated, as it were, to Scotland or to Glasgow and had quite a big role.

“There were partnerships between companies in Stoke and Glasgow in particular, but it’s not well-known.”

Danny feels one element of tiled closes is overlooked, both literally and metaphorically.

“One of the forgotten histories around architectural ceramics is terrazzo floors,” Danny says.

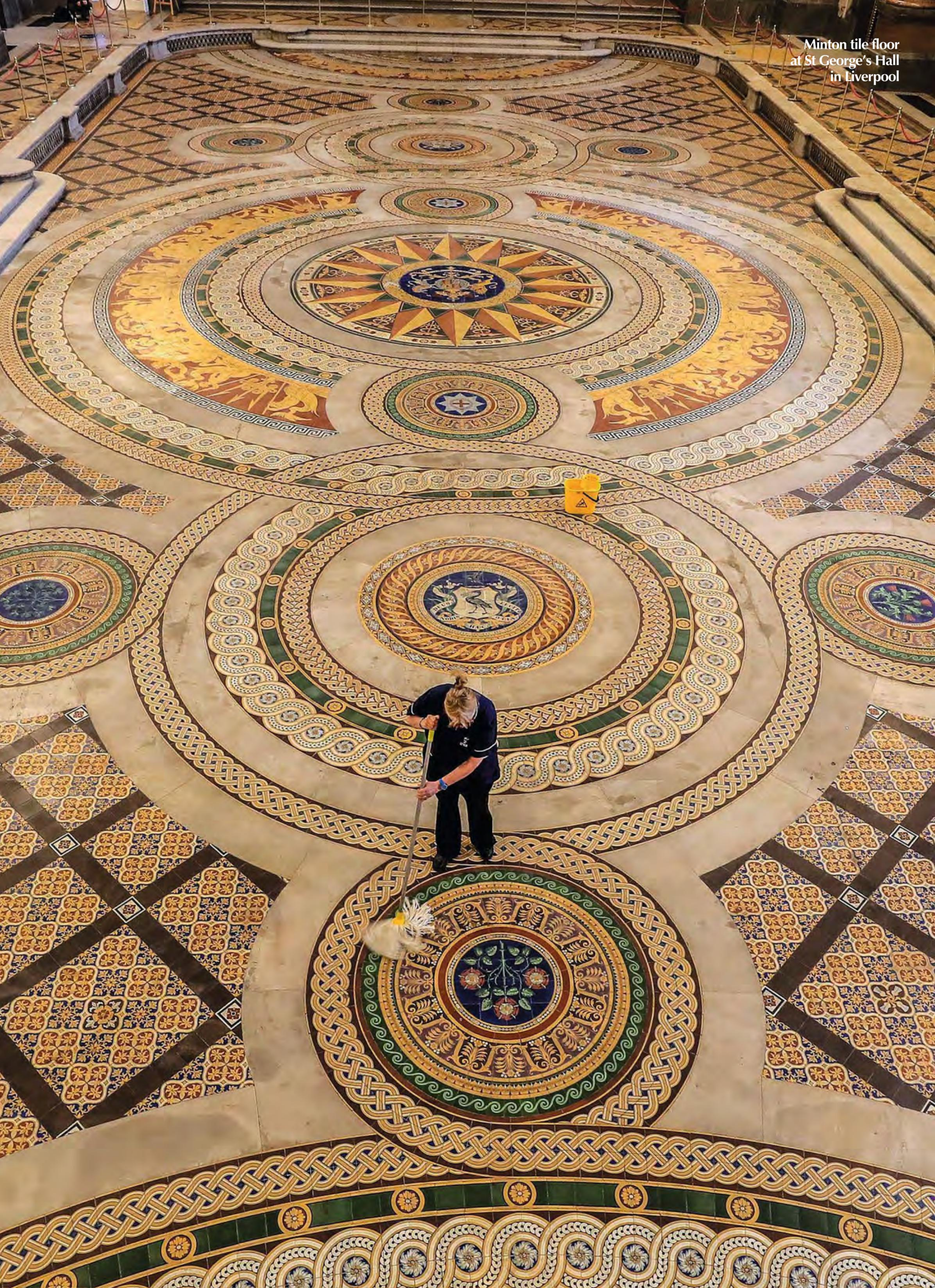
“You’ll find those from the 1900s onwards going »

FASCINATING FACTS

Wally dugs were manufactured in bulk at potteries, and stood guard atop many a Scottish fireplace.

John Moyr Smith attended Glasgow School of Art and became president of the Glasgow Architectural Association.

The earliest examples of tilemaking date back to Egypt, around the 4th century BC.



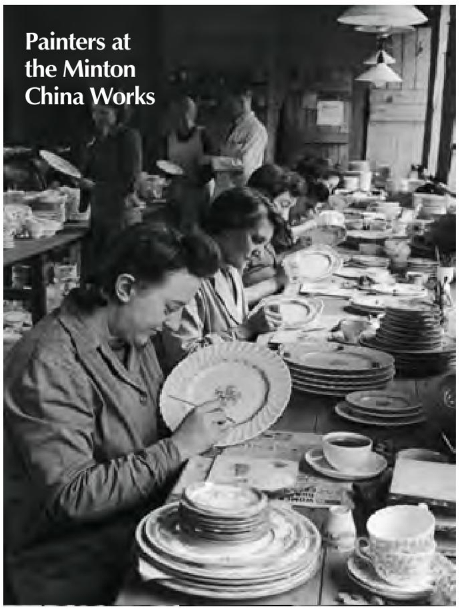
Minton tile floor
at St George's Hall
in Liverpool

Tiles at a property on Glasgow's Beaton Road

Old Gladstone Potteries in Stoke-on-Trent

DID YOU KNOW?

The Staffordshire Potteries is the industrial area encompassing the six towns of Burslem, Stoke, Fenton, Hanley, Longton and Tunstall – now the city of Stoke-on-Trent in Staffordshire, England. The area became a centre of ceramic production in the early 17th century due to the local availability of clay, salt, lead and coal.


Painters at the Minton China Works

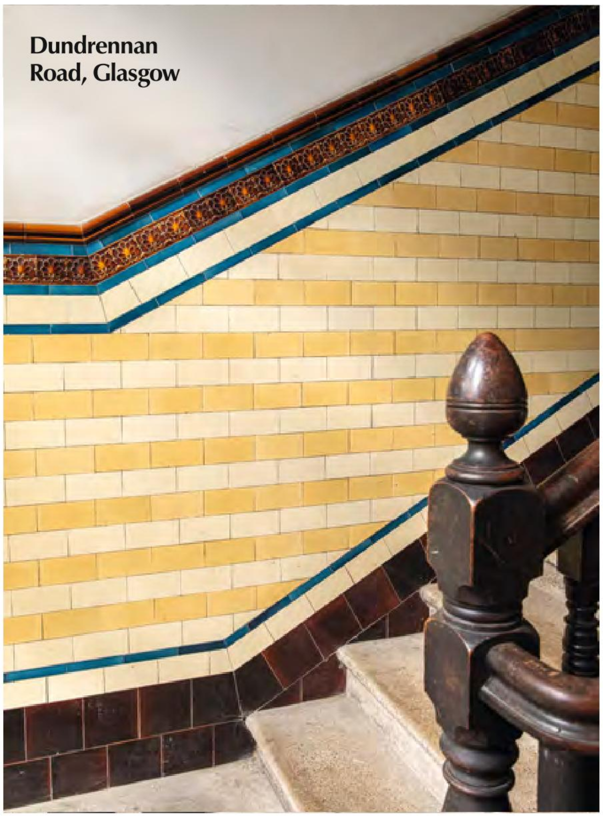
> *“They’re easy to clean and keep clean”*

into the Art Deco period particularly. In Edinburgh and Glasgow, you have some amazing examples.

“They’re much less obvious, bright and decorative in the main than the wall tiles that you’ll see – but sometimes they are combined.

“Terrazzo floors are overlooked, but they have a really interesting history, quite an interrelated history with Italian immigrants, for instance, because marble chips are used to create the patterns.” S

The Tnmnttiles online archive run by Glasgow-based Zan Phee is an excellent resource for those who are interested in finding out more about tenement tiles.


Dundrennan Road, Glasgow

Pictures: ALAMY, EVE CONROY

AYE!

Test your knowledge of Scotland with our fascinating and fun facts!

WC in Fields

There's a Scottish portable toilet company called WC in Fields! The firm is based in Kirkcudbright, Dumfries and Galloway.

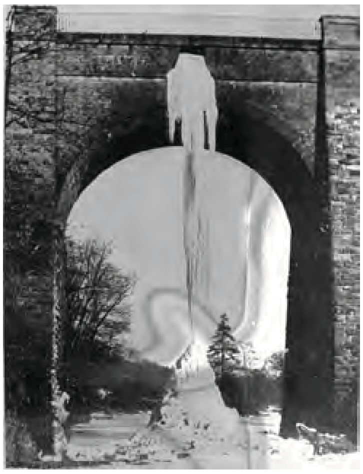
A nine-carat gold toilet seat is one of the strangest items that's been taken into a Glasgow pawn shop.

On the Inner Hebridean Isle of Skye, tourists outnumber locals by a staggering 50 to one. There are around 13,000 permanent residents and approximately 650,000 annual visitors.

In 1384, John Patrick – an ambassador from Scotland travelling to Aragon in Spain – was gruesomely murdered in France when rebels forced a red-hot iron crown on to his head.

The Links Market in Kirkcaldy, Fife, is Europe's longest street fair.

Scottish TV presenter Carol Smillie is a qualified humanist celebrant – conducting non-religious baby namings, funerals and wedding ceremonies.



In 1895, the town of Broxburn in West Lothian became a tourist attraction when a 22-metre (75 foot) icicle formed at the Almond Aqueduct of the Union Canal. A postcard was even produced to mark the event.

An ancient privilege gives the doorkeepers at the Court of Session in Scotland's capital, Edinburgh, the power to impose a five-shilling fine on anyone turning up to the court precinct wearing spurs.

In July 2021, an entire Scottish whisky distillery – including all the fixtures, fittings and even flooring – was shipped from Buckie, in Moray, to China's Ordos City. It's set to be the first whisky distillery in Inner Mongolia.

Steven Pressley – the Scottish footballer who was nicknamed Elvis – is actually related to Elvis Presley! The former Hearts and Scotland star was all shook up to discover that he and the "king of rock 'n' roll" are distant cousins.

Liberace once officially opened a hotel in Irvine. In 1960, the flamboyant Las Vegas showman was appearing in Glasgow. He was persuaded by local businessman Joe Caldwell to cut the ribbon at the Eglinton Arms Hotel – now known as The Carrick – on Irvine's High Street.

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The world's first transatlantic telephone cable ran from Gallanach Bay, Oban, to Clarenville in Canada. The 3604-kilometre (2240 mile) cable took three years to lay and went "live" on September 25, 1956.

Spandau Ballet

Spandau Ballet's 1983 No 1 single, *True*, was inspired by Gary Kemp's crush on Scots singer and actress Clare Grogan. Gary even travelled up to Scotland to have tea with the Glasgow-born Altered Images frontwoman and her mum and dad.

"Bagwame" is old Scots for a silly person who stuffs their face with food.

For more stunning Scots facts visit our website: scotsmagazine.com/articles/q-aye-collections

Words: GAYLE ANDERSON
Pictures: ALAMY, REX/SHUTTERSTOCK, HAMISH BROWN

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THE Scots MAGAZINE

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Top Five Scots Summer Cocktails

Enjoy summer with a Scottish twist – the temperatures are heating up and it's perfect beer garden weather, so why not enjoy some homemade cocktails using Scottish drinks brands? We've pulled together a list of our favourites. From Barra Mojitos to Wild Eve Spritz, fill up your cup. Go online and discover new refreshments to keep you cool!

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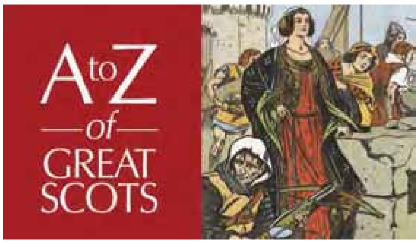
Scotland's Beautiful Beaches

Experience a fantastic seaside holiday and stunning beaches without leaving Scotland. Visit our website and discover our favourite sandy stops along Scotland's coastlines! Tell us your favourites on social media.



A to Z of GREAT SCOTS

Facts

A To Z Of Great Scots

Keep an eye out on our social media channels for a quick factfile on some of Scotland's notable historical figures – both well-known and more obscure. Read more on our website about each interesting individual!

What's On

Food Market Round-up!

It's food market season and all the best produce is starting to hit the stalls! Read our round-up of the best food market spots in Scotland and where to find them this summer. Visit our website to find out more.

Pictures: REX/SHUTTERSTOCK

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